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THE ELUSIVE EMILY
SAUL MALOFF

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NEWS & VIEWS

The Baby Airlift

The opposition of Caritas, the international relief agency headquartered at the Vatican, to the "mass expatriation" of South Vietnamese orphans put Catholic officials in this country on the defensive.

Leaders of the American hierarchy had instantly endorsed the baby airlift, and the president of the U.S. Catholic Conference had pledged to President Ford the cooperation of all Catholic relief agencies in "this urgent humanitarian challenge."

Then came the statement of Msgr. Charles Grange, head of Caritas' Asian Department: "We feel the airlift is a deplorable and unjustified mistake which does not solve the problem. It was originated by an unmotivated hysteria which appears to have fortunately faded. Adoption is contrary to the cultural traditions of the Vietnamese people. Orphans are generally placed in the custody of other relatives or taken care of by the community in villages or districts. Adoption by strangers has seldom been considered in the past."

The U.S. government might "just pick up kids off the streets," responded one Catholic official, but Catholic agencies are evacuating from South Vietnam only children who have been documented with case histories as orphans.

That explanation might have taken care of objections that the airlift was indiscriminate—that it was catching up non-orphans as well as orphans. It left unanswered the point of Vietnamese "cultural traditions" raised by Caritas.

In any case, U.S. Catholic policy remained firm in the face of Caritas criticism. The standards employed in placing Vietnamese orphans were "of the highest professional level, with the best interests of the child considered paramount," said Bishop Edward Swanstrom, director of Catholic Relief Services. The placements were being carried out "in complete cooperation with the Roman Catholic bishops of South Vietnam," he added, "and will continue on that basis."

Meanwhile, the Associated Press, ever watchful for interesting personality conjunctions, moved this story on its wires for April 10:

NEW YORK—*What do Playboy Hugh Hefner and Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop of New York, have in common?*

Both did their part at La Guardia Airport Wednesday to get Vietnamese orphans to their new adoptive parents.

The archbishop met a TWA liner chartered by Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities and gave a helping hand to Nguyen Yan Tu, 6, whose polio-crippled legs were encased in steel braces.

Hours later, Hefner's plush black Bunny jet set down from San Francisco and more orphans spilled into the airport, carried in the arms of Hefner's bunnies.

Nasty? Not so much so as the editorial cartoon on page one of the *Manchester Guardian's* weekly for April 12. It showed President Ford in football gear dashing down the field with a Vietnamese baby tucked, football-like, into his right arm.

In an accompanying story, the *Guardian* advised Britons against the American "sentimental frivolity": "British families who want to help should ask themselves whether instead of adopting a doe-eyed Vietnamese child they would be prepared to have a middle-aged South Vietnamese Army major living in their house for the rest of his natural life."

So much for emotionalism in Britain.

Protestors in Court

Two anti-war protestors from Jonah House in Baltimore were hit with 90 days for pouring human blood on an American flag last Jan. 31 in the foyer of the White House. It was one of the stiffest sentences of its type since the government was riding shot-gun on the Berrigans. Actions like blood-pouring, a misdemeanor, have been drawing fines or suspended sentences. Off to D.C. Jail went Ronald Rieck and Christopher E. Moore. Moore was also charged with simple assault as the result of an alleged scuffle with an Executive Protective Service policeman during the incident.

Resolved, meanwhile, seems the case of anti-war activist Jim Douglass. Two years ago Douglass refused to pay a $500 fine for a blood-pouring incident in Hawaii, instead making a $500 contribution to a fund to help victims of the bombing in Indochina. Last Feb. 22, while preparing to address a conference on nonviolence at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, Douglass was arrested by the FBI. He was returned to Hawaii, where he expected jailing under a term of six months to a year. Instead, he was released, being given unsupervised probation for two and a half years and no travel restrictions. There was applause from the courtroom. Douglass termed the outcome a "gift in and through community."

The Protestant Press

The United Methodist Board of Publication has voted to discontinue its general church magazine, *United Methodists Today*, and its specialized clergy insert, *Today's Ministry*, and "the decision [has] produced shock waves not only in United Methodist circles but throughout the world of religious journalism." The comment is from *The Christian Century*.

The action means that for the first time in its 150-year history, America's second-largest Protestant denomination will be without a general church magazine for its 10 million members. More particularly, according to the *Century*, it "marks the end of an era which has seen the flourishing of well-edited general church publications with impressive circulations." (*United Methodists Today* had a circulation of 141,427, down from the high of 899,376 enjoyed by its predecessor, *Together*.)

The implications of *United Methodists Today*'s demise cannot be overlooked, the *Century* said. The magazine allowed that economics was a factor—"astronomical" rises in printing costs and postage rates, for instance. But it wondered if there were not deeper problems.

"There is the lingering suspicion," it editorialized, "that church periodicals reflect the establishment and are inclined to use public relations gimmicks to push programs."

In the same breath it reflected that "possibly it is wrong to assume that the average reader, if there is one, is a deeply committed Christian longing for in-depth information about the church."

Its conclusion: "One era in religious journalism has gone. A new era awaits definition."

Odds and Ends

—Proper Bostonians held their breaths when President Ford arrived for the April 19 commemoration of the hanging of the lanterns in Old North Church. Last time he was in town he startled folks when he recalled the lanterns' code: "One if by day and two if by night."

—St. John the Evangelist parochial school in Hudson, N.H., will close in June. Officials cited declining revenues from parish bingo.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Altar-Persons

Garrett Park, Md.

To the Editors: To you "The use of girls to serve Mass has to be the great Catholic *non-issue* of 1975" [News & Views, 28 February]. As an isolated instance, perhaps, but as another sign that women are not fully members of the Roman Catholic Church, it is hardly a non-issue. By all means, let us show little girls at an early age that they are second-class, even in that institution which preaches that God loves all of us. Would *Commonweal* have made the same kind of remark about little black boys not being allowed to be altar-boys?

I am neither a little girl wishing to be an altar-server, nor the mother of one, nor a member of the NAL. I am however a woman, who is getting very tired of being a second-class Catholic.

JEAN M. GURIAN

What the News & Views item meant to suggest was that for anyone to argue against using girls to serve Mass was preposterous, or, as it was worded, that the whole thing was a non-issue, simply because there really was nothing to debate—Ed.

Elementary Disasters

San Angelo, Texas

To the Editors: Regarding "Masters of Disaster" [The Screen, 4/11/75]: It appears that Hollywood has stumbled into a kind of philosophical integrity with its four spectacles of disaster, *Poseidon Adventure, Towering Inferno, Airport '75,* and *Earthquake.* Together they form a coherent scenario for catastrophe in the four elements. And the "best and brightest" of humanity—scientists, urban planners, technicians, experts and heroes—are able to salvage little more than a few chunks of human and inorganic rubble. This may well indicate a current "apocalyptic" mentality, an "end-of-the-world" syndrome. But could

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DISPERSE, YE REBELS!

Americans approach the celebration of our nation's Bicentennial with caution. It has been argued that, since we have a bit more to be ashamed of at the moment than to celebrate, this is one birthday we could skip.

On one level, so many of the Bicentennial gimmicks are vulgar rip-offs. The Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus semiclimaxed with Betsy Ross on an elephant and Uncle Sam on stilts. The Rose Bowl Parade displayed a flower float with the Peanuts comic strip kids as Washington's troops crossing the Delaware and Snoopy the dog as George. At a recent State Department press conference Walt Disney enterprises announced that it will develop a Bicentennial pageant, "America on Parade," with Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy as Revolutionaries. This will enable adults to see the Revolution "through the eyes of a child." Meanwhile, so-called "Freedom Train" whistle-stops the land, whipping customers through on a conveyor belt, letting them glimpse, for a fee, President Ford's personal bible, the original Howdy Doody, and a film clip of Marilyn Monroe. What about Agnew's wallet and Sinatra's toupee?

On a more serious level, we have just "lost" a war we never should have fought. Countless graves and cities in rubble testify to our national pride gone wrong. We have just survived six years with our worst President—the one who planned to manipulate the Bicentennial to increase his already obscene power, and who came to represent the militarism, violence, paranoia, deceit and greed that characterize the distortion of the true American dream. In his place we have a President who will dominate the year's festivities in his less obnoxious but uninspiring and highly political style—reminding us, spiritual descendents of the ragged militia at Concord Bridge, that we must be proud of our military clout. Meanwhile, in the eyes of much of the world, we have seen history come full cycle and have

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assumed, through our guns and giant corporations, the role of the imperialist superpower we rebelled against.

But birthdays do not go away if we pretend to skip them. If we do not have a President who inspires intelligent self-criticism, we can remember that in 1776 we had no President at all. Fresh leadership will have to come from other institutions—civic groups, universities and churches—and from political spokesmen who can rearticulate what "all men are created equal" and "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" mean today.

This is a time for historians and teachers to reexamine our national character in the light of what we have learned from the Vietnam political and moral disaster. Just as the riots of the '60s alerted us to the unacknowledged pattern of violence in our past, so should our Asian policy make us admit our economic and military imperialism. It was a policy that sprang from the dark underside of the same qualities that made us unique: our abundance, our wrestling with the frontier and our concept of Mission. Perhaps this generation of students can acquire a love of their country not built on illusions and patriotic braggadocio but on a knowledge consistent with human experience and sound theology: that nations, like individuals, sin. They must face their guilt and absorb its lessons. That is how a young nation gains what America is said to lack—maturity.

The American Catholic Church's contribution to this re-evaluation of our national spirit is *Liberty and Justice for All*, a 60-page guide for a series of public hearings and grass-roots discussions meant to lead to an October 1976 national conference in Detroit and a new five-year plan of Catholic social action. The booklet of essays and discussion questions, which has been severely criticized, is not all bad. (An enterprising Catholic publisher should get out a better one and compete.) Although the format is dull, with no pictures or charts, its content is in line with the social encyclicals and it asks harder questions than most Catholics have collectively faced. If read in conjunction with two lively paperbacks published by the Peoples Bicentennial Commission (1346 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D.C.)—*Voices of the American Revolution* (Bantam, $1.75) and *Common Sense II* (Bantam, $1.45), "an alarm against today's tyrants, the giant corporations"—the discussion might really perk up.

But, we would feel more confident about the church's Bicentennial project if: the American hierarchy had a better record for listening to its own scholars and voices from the grass roots; we had not had fine words on social justice with no follow-up before; there were any evidence that the church leadership was not so Tory-minded as a way of life. Usually, rebels in the church are as welcome as prophets in Jerusalem. Perhaps a "hierarchy" is, by nature, nervous about recalling any Revolution. Perhaps too this is the church's perfect chance to show it is really at home in a democratic country. Remember, one of George III's mistakes was that he didn't listen.

WASHINGTON REPORT

'MAY DAY . . . MAY DAY'

An outer edge of American Empire has been curled back. Our puppet government in Cambodia has fallen. Adjoining South Vietnam is uncongenial to our presence there. Its capital, Saigon, is under siege and its government, a no-account aggregation propped up by American funds, is in disarray, 30 years after Ho Chi Minh undertook to drive Westerners from authority in Vietnam. Apprehension characterizes the governments of Thailand, Singapore, purportedly neutralist Laos, South Korea and, even, the Philippines, one of the first of our imperial acquisitions. Asian leaders there and elsewhere are becoming less receptive to permitting their countries to be military and economic foraging grounds for the United States. Asia for the Asians.

The impact upon the Ford administration is not yet clear. The *attentistes* comprise a majority in the capital town of magnificent obsessions and lost causes. Policymakers, past and present, and the politically ambitious jostle each other as they straddle the political fence. Ultimately, most will descend when a prevailing opinion, as to the saints and the sinners, is discerned. In the country, the predominant view appears to be a plague-on-all. One exception is the political right, where the Reagan-ites are blaming incumbent leaders of both parties. However, the left, such as it exists, occupies itself with schemes of economic reform at home and, abroad, with reappraisals of its hitherto constant support of Israel. The wide center is more attentive to its own daily problems of high prices for food and shelter and shrinking employment prospects for its sons and daughters.

The behavior of the Ford administration during the fall of our 30-year policy in Southeast Asia has been inept, at best, and conceivably scandalous. The diplomatic world knows that *les jeux sont faits*, but in late April no effective attempt had been made to evacuate several thousand Americans in South Vietnam—military, diplomatic and contractors and their dependents. The excuse was that their removal would cause "panic" among the South Vietnamese and the Thieu government there. But there was growing evidence that the Americans were being kept there as "hostages" in some desperate gamble to keep President Thieu, or a successor, afloat. This ap-

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peared to be the predominating view of the 17 members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, although they differed over whether this policy was initiated in Washington or by our embassy in Saigon. Martin Graham is our Ambassador there. The supercilious Graham, member of a profession known for its practitioners "going native" in their overseas posts, is notoriously known for going the most-native. Whether the initiative was his or Washington's, Mr. Kissinger's Nobel peace prize is irreparably tarnished. And there are those among President Ford's advisors who would throw Kissinger to the wolves, beginning to gather around the policy corpse.

During the week of April 14, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee met in executive session to discuss the deteriorating military situation in South Vietnam, paricularly in reference to the Americans remaining there. A bipartisan coalition on the Committee was apprehensive, if not suspicious, that something sinister was afoot. Fueling its suspicions was a bill submitted to it by the President. It would permit, existing prohibitory statutes to the contrary, American troops to reenter Vietnam under the guise of "humanitarian evacuation." We could bomb Hanoi and then send troops there to help the populace under this bill, said one senator. The Committee, scarred by its uncritical acceptance of the Gulf-of-Tonkin resolution foisted on it by President Johnson 10 years ago, turned aside the administration's bill. For two days it then discussed a more restrictive bill that would allow the reentry of unspecified numbers of American troops into South Vietnam in order to evacuate Americans. But the bill also authorized the evacuation of a category described as "endangered foreign nationals," said by the President's men to be South Vietnamese—as many as 175,000 of them—whose lives were described as in peril because of service to the United States. Opponents of this bill described the $200-million authorized to finance the evacuation as "ransom" and the Americans as being "hostages." They bargained, in a fashion, with the administration in hopes of accelerating the withdrawal of Americans. The administration was offering at the time conflicting numbers—ranging from a few dozen to a few hundred, but nowhere at the rate necessary to avoid putting remaining Americans under the fire of the Vietcong and North Vietnamese troops. The administration was also conceding to the Committee that the time was passing, may even have passed, when all Americans in South Vietnam, mostly in Saigon, could be evacuated without peril.

On the third day of the Committee's discussion, the bipartisan coalition fell apart. There was still no assurance that the rate of evacuation would be increased, but senators on the Committee were now contradicting their position of the two previous days and giving the President full faith and credit that somehow an evacuation, without casualties, would be undertaken. The Committee, therefore, approved 14 votes to 3 an omnibus aid bill—to evacuate South Vietnamese (numbers unspecified) and Americans. Only the Senate Majority Leader, Senator Mansfield, and Senators Biden and Clark voted "nay." Even one of the senators supporting the bill voiced an apprehension that the book may not yet be closed, as the 1973 Paris Accords stipulated, on our direct military involvement in Vietnam—a faulty involvement, one dissenting senator pointed out, that led to the death of 55,000 American servicemen and an expenditure of $150 billion. Papering over the potential hazards, another senator said, "Well, I guess you have to trust someone." The Committee had knuckled under—and without any discernible pressure from their constituents as a rationale. Nor did the Committee choose to reaffirm the authority of a President under the Constitution to evacuate Americans without any imprimatur by the Congress—just as preceding Presidents long ago had rescued endangered Americans from China, Japan and Nicaragua. It defeated a resolution to that effect, although earlier in the week it had reminded an unheeding President during a meeting at the White House that he holds such authority.

The President replied that the United States must hang in there and protect its South Vietnamese supporters—or else there will come about lost faith in American promises. The President's Secretary of State is busy denying that there exist any "secret agreements" beyond the Paris Accords of 1973, under which American troops were withdrawn, to sustain the South Vietnamese government beyond whatever military assistance programs publicly funded by Congress. However, late last month curious senators were on the trail of a report that President Ford himself, within a few days of becoming President in August, 1974, wrote a letter to President Thieu himself stipulating that adequate military assistance would continue to flow into South Vietnam. In view of the Ford-Kissinger disclaimers, such a letter, should it exist, would be an interesting document—one to add to the perfidiousness of six Democratic and Republican presidential administrations in respect to our involvement in Southeast Asia.

A full history of this sorry chapter remains to be written. Crusts of history are now being offered. They will not curb the appetite to know what really went on.

Someone needs to reassure those who still insist on a global role that Britain lost its Atlantic seaboard colonies and France "lost" Quebec and sold Louisiana without either entering into decline in international affairs. It can be argued that statesmen may not be the full answer to an effective foreign policy. Certainly, the nation's reigning diplomat at this moment has a vested interest in his policies and actively resists changes long ago desirable—pulling telephone cords from their moorings in his office may assuage his frustration but will not alter the condition of the nation.

One calmer statesman, Talleyrand, has observed: "The

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art of statesmanship is to foresee the inevitable and to expedite its occurrence."

Then, there's a maneuver to avoid a gory parallel to the domestic quarrel about "who lost China?" which spawned Joe McCarthy. We should convince ourselves to move on as a nation to positive endeavors in international affairs—food supply and reserves and disarmament, among other sectors. This suggests a more productive way of holding ascendancy in an unruly world than engaging in firefights—tests of competing ballistics—in East Asia with Communist forces. All of these we've lost and, in so doing, we have increased the heavy hand of inquisitorial government upon its citizens.

SISYPHUS

THE BARTLETT AMENDMENT

ABORTIONS ON MEDICAID?

The United States Senate came one step closer on April 10 to the acceptance of a policy which would refuse to condition use of the statutory benefit of Medicaid upon the forfeiture of the constitutional right of abortion.

No one will be really satisfied with the 54-36 vote to table the amendment of Republican Dewey Bartlett of Oklahoma. That amendment proposed that: "No funds authorized under the Social Security Act may be used to pay for or encourage the performance of abortions, except such abortions as are necessary to save the life of a mother."

The defeat of the Bartlett amendment is a reversal for the Senate, which in late 1974 had refused by a vote of 50-34 to table this measure. The amendment was deleted in conference because the House had not taken up the matter; in addition, the inclusion of such a basic policy in an appropriations bill was thought to be inappropriate.

If there is any such thing as a "Catholic position" on abortion and the law it was not present in the Senate debate on April 10. Senator Bartlett, a Catholic former Governor of Oklahoma, was opposed by Senator Edward Kennedy, the chairman of the relevant subcommittee and floor manager of the bill. The fifteen Catholics in the Senate divided eight to seven in favor of tabling the matter.

The basic question centered on whether or not the more than 22 million people eligible for Medicaid benefits can have this program reimburse physicians and hospitals for abortions. The decision of the Senate not to change existing law is in line with 41 states which either voluntarily or by court order now fully reimburse for legal abortions under Medicaid. The remaining states have various restrictions, some of which are now being challenged in the courts.

At stake is some $40 to $50 million spent annually by Medicaid for abortion reimbursement. A study by H.E.W. which gave this estimate, however, indicated that the federal government would spend between $450 and $560 million in one year alone if those women who obtained an abortion through Medicaid carried their pregnancies to term and received the usual medical care and welfare payments.

No one reason emerged why the Senate voted to table the Bartlett amendment. Senator Kennedy pointed out perceptively that the proposed amendment is poorly drawn, does not define the word "encourage," and is probably broad enough to prevent Medicaid from furnishing IUDs. Senator Kennedy also noted that at least 51,000 rapes were reported last year but that the actual incidence of rape is possibly nine times that amount with 4 per cent of those rapes resulting in pregnancies—a number which could mean as many as 18,000 per year.

Senator James Buckley, a co-sponsor of the Bartlett amendment alleged that 28 percent of all abortions in the year 1974 were paid for by the federal government. Senator Buckley asserted that the issue was not whether the senators approved or disapproved of abortion but whether women are entitled to federal funding for the exercise of their legal rights to obtain an abortion.

Senator William Hathaway (D.Maine) opposed the Bartlett amendment in these words: "By denying the use of Medicaid and other Social Security funds for abortion, the amendment effectively denies the opportunity for an abortion to the poor, and to the poor alone."

Senator Hathaway concluded that since the "Bartlett amendment only applies to low-income people, but not to the population at large, it is blatantly discriminatory on economic grounds, and therefore unconstitutional.

The discriminatory impact of the Bartlett amendment was pointed out in a report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The Commission's report emphasized that it took no position on the moral or theological issues underlying abortion. The Commission simply stated that the no-abortion restriction on Medicaid funds would impact adversely only on low-income women, among whom racial and ethnic minority women are disproportionately represented.

The two-hour debate on the Bartlett amendment had four proponents including Bartlett and Buckley. The others were Senator Pastore (D-R.I.) and Senator Garn (R-Utah). Speaking against the Bartlett amendment, in

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addition to Kennedy and Hathaway, were Senators Percy (R-Ill.) and Javits (R-N.Y.). Material at the end of the debate against the amendment was inserted by Senators Muskie (D-Maine), Packwood (R-Oregon), Nelson (D-Wis.), Bayh (D-Ind.) and Brooke (R-Mass.).

It is uncertain whether the House will take up an amendment which would cut off Medicaid funds for abortions. Three Republican congressmen who regularly brought this issue to the floor of the House in the 93rd Congress were all defeated. The complexities of this matter, touched upon but not really explored in the Senate debate, might well give pause to any member of the House who would want to preclude Medicaid funds from any woman who is seeking a legal abortion.

It seems to me that, whatever one's view of abortion might be, a law terminating Medicaid benefits for indigent pregnant women who elect to terminate their pregnancies by abortion cannot be justified by any legal or constitutional norm.

A woman's decision to terminate her pregnancy by abortion is now, by Supreme Court mandate, a fundamental constitutional right. It is elementary jurisprudence that the government may not condition the receipt of a statutory benefit upon the forfeiture of a constitutional right. It could be argued that the woman who is denied Medicaid help for an abortion does not forfeit her constitutional right but forfeits only any claim to financial reimbursement for the exercise of that constitutional right. This particular distinction is the crucial question and is a question unfortunately not really resolved by the Senate debate on April 10.

The denial of Medicaid benefits is at least an infringement or a qualification upon the constitutional right of a woman to an abortion. Such a qualification can be justified under accepted legal norms only by some compelling governmental interest in the narrowing or the diminution of a constitutional right. Such a compelling governmental interest was not demonstrated by the proponents of the Bartlett amendment. The compelling interest cannot be that of a taxpayer alone since the removal of Medicaid for abortions will cost the American taxpayer ten times as much as the price of federally-assisted abortions since only those eligible for Medicaid would be affected.

The Senate by tabling the Bartlett amendment followed the policies enunciated by six different federal court decisions. These rulings have stated that, if the federal government makes Medicaid funds available for maternity care, it may not simultaneously deny Medicaid funds for abortions. These courts have never said that the federal government has an obligation to finance abortions. Indeed these federal decisions do not even say that the federal government must finance maternity care under Medicaid. But the six federal decisions are unanimous in stating that if the federal government provides one, it *has* to provide the other. To do otherwise would place the federal government clearly at variance with the Supreme Court decision on abortion as well as with a long line of court rulings on equal protection.

The Senate debate on April 10 will not close the book on the complex question of how Congress will or should react to abortion. The debate raised questions to which no one in the Congress has answers. One, raised by Senator Birch Bayh, related to the kind of counseling which applicants for abortions under Medicaid received. Senator Bayh wondered whether alternatives to abortion are presented to such applicants. Other participants in the debate suggested or intimated that mothers on welfare were offered federally-financed abortions as a substitute for planned parenthood.

About the only generalization that can be drawn from the Senate debate on Medicaid and abortions is the fact that there is no such thing as a "Catholic position" on this subject. Some may fear that Catholic citizens in America are seeking to impose their own views of abortion on non-Catholic citizens. However true or untrue that allegation may be, no one can assert that Catholics in the Congress are united on any legal-moral approach to abortion.

ROBERT F. DRINAN

(Father Robert F. Drinan, S.J., former dean of the Boston College Law School, is a congressman from Massachusetts.)

CHARLES PRATT

BRASS RUBBING

We touched the hidden forms
As gently as a lover could,
Then took the wax and rubbed
Until a knight and lady stood
Revealed, like breath on glass;
And now, benign and timeless, they
Are watching from a frame
The mingled pressures of our lives:
What we, when rubbed, become.

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AMERICA AND CRISIS

MICHAEL NOVAK

In the late 1930s, the peace movement in the U.S. was triumphant. Magnificant rallies rocked the nation's campuses. No one wished to hear again of war. In this context, Reinhold Niebuhr was accused of immorality and retrogression for suggesting that the future was not likely to be peaceful; that arming ourselves would soon become a moral imperative; that the crisis of the West was upon us, which we might not survive. So unwelcome were his contributions in *The Christian Century* that he felt obliged to found a journal of his own, called *Christianity and Crisis*. We need that Reinhold Niebuhr now.

"I'm so ashamed of the U.S. government," an American in Vietnam said of his unit's recent sneak retreat. "I'll never be able to work for it again." He had looked into the faces of the 108 Vietnamese families that had worked with the Americans at Nha Trang, people whose political commitment had been public, people who had been promised safety, people vulnerable to retribution,—and he had to watch them over blazing rifles as the Americans roared aloft alone, while their friends reached out in vain for place.

So Lyndon Johnson was more prophetic then he knew. In exquisitely personal terms, Americans *did* tuck their tails and run. Americans did break their commitment. Americans did leave an ally in the lurch.

So deep a tragedy, so deep a cruelty, has not been seen since the Americans first brutally escalated the war. Rush in; rush out. Overdo the going in. Overdo the running out. What sort of leadership, on the right and on the left, have we been cursed with?

I have never been so ashamed of America as during the last days of March, 1975, watching the long lines of refugees, the infants, the parents, the broken armies. Is this what happens to a people that puts its trust in us? That commits its destiny by accepting jobs with our personnel? That accepts our aid? I wonder how many will be punished as "collaborators." I do not understand how anyone in the world should ever trust the United States again.

"The best and the brightest" underestimated the human factor in Vietnam. They chose high technology and heavy armaments, instead of small cadres and rifle power, as the instrument of strategy. And that made the hundred-year struggle too brutal to support.

But the peace movement, especially those whose political sympathies are usually with the "Third World," also underestimated the human factor. They never appreciated how many of the South Vietnamese did *not* wish to live under the Vietcong or the North Vietnamese. They idealized the North Vietnamese; they heaped contempt upon the South Vietnamese; they castigated the "corrupt" leadership of the South—and it was corrupt —but they extolled the totalitarian, disciplined leadership of the North. "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh!" They collected statistics on the political prisoners in the South, but did not notice that there is no dissident politics in the North. No one marched upon the White House demanding that an armada of ships and airplanes be provided to help the refugees to safety. No one cared about our allies, mothers and fathers, grandparents and children, who had compromised their lives because they preferred a way of life like ours and trusted us.

As the Saigon correspondent of the *New York Times* tardily reported (March 30), South Vietnam remained, despite obvious abuses, a remarkably unregimented and free society. That is why the corruption, the disorganization, the casualness, the laughing and the playing in Saigon, have long continued; no one enforced discipline. That is also why, despite the distaste of the Buddhist leadership for the government of General Thieu, the Buddhists never turned to the Vietcong. They liked Thieu very little; they liked the Vietcong even less. And for good reason. They have seen the Vietcong and North Vietnamese in operation. Thousands of families bear the scars, tell tales of "discipline."

In recent months, remarkably, no one has written of the Vietcong. Once Americans were out of Vietnam, the journalists became in this respect more truthful. Eleven divisions of North Vietnamese troops were in the country, supplied with weaponry by Russia, far superior to any possessed by the South Vietnamese, in stockpiles sufficient to sustain an offensive over an entire year. The South Vietnamese had ammunition for a single month. Their planes, helicopters, and other equipment were both inferior and lacking in spare parts; many were not functional. Which side, would one expect, ought to have superior morale?

The North Vietnamese were lucky. They had as allies the Chinese and the Russians. There was no peace movement in their ranks, no dissent, no liberty. The South Vietnamese had the misfortune to choose us; and we had the sorrow of using our freedom badly.

The effects of the disintegration of South Vietnam are matched by those of the collapse of Cambodia and Laos; the turning elsewhere of Thailland; the rise of guerrilla activity again in Malaysia; the brazen swing leftwards in Portugal; the pressures on Israel to surrender territories for a demonstrably empty American guarantee and for a weak pledge by Egypt—weak because Egypt wants to

(Continued on page 127)

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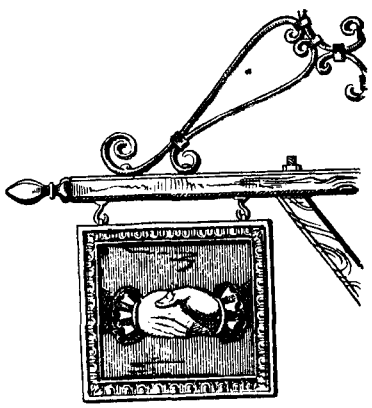
GHOST WRITING

BRUCE COOK



The haunting side of the best-seller list and other ghostly oddities

As hanging for the condemned man, nothing concentrates a writer's mind quite so wonderfully as the threat of lawsuit. I found that out for myself a couple of years ago. At issue was an article I had written for the *National Observer* not long after the publication of Carlos Castaneda's *Journey to Ixtlan*. Having had the chance to put some questions to him face-to-face some time before, I suggested rather timidly in my article that 1) Castaneda was not quite the man he said he was; and 2) he had had the help of a collaborator in writing his book—in other words, that he had used a ghost writer.

His publisher, Simon and Schuster, let out a great howl of rage in the form of a letter from their attorney threatening a libel suit unless a retraction was printed. The first of my misgivings about Mr. Castaneda didn't seem to bother them much. (I found out why when *Time* came out a few weeks later with a cover story that not only cast doubt on his purported identity, but quoted Michael Korda, editor-in-chief at Simon and Schuster, to the effect that Carlos was such a rogue you could never depend on anything he said.) No, what angered them was my suggestion that he must have had a collaborator to help him produce the good narrative prose in which his books were written. I thought it then, and I think it still.

What happened? Nothing really. My publication printed no retraction, and Simon and Schuster did not sue. Still, they had me going there for a while, I can tell you, and as it became clear that what had offended them most was my suggestion of an anonymous collaborator, I began to wonder just why that should have been. After all, if Carlos Castaneda had been a sports figure, an actor, or a politician, they could hardly have shown the same indignation. We have come to accept it as a matter of course that such books are actually written by somebody else. I remember that one Sunday morning while still under the noose, I happened to look over the best seller list of the *New York Times*, and it came to me with a start that of all those listed under nonfiction, there was only one—David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest*—that I would have sworn absolutely was the work of one man only whose name appeared as the author on the title page. Among those on the list that week was one acknowledged collaboration (an "as told to"), another which the author had admitted was "tape-recorded." The others included a diet book, books by a psychiatrist, a veterinarian, an attorney, and one by a couple of lesser satellites of the Kennedy family—all of which, on principle, I held suspect.

I was sufficiently struck by this to have since done a bit of desultory digging into the whole question of ghost writing. I have learned, for instance, that those readily identified by the formulae "as told to" and "with" are certainly not the only ones written with the aid of a collaborator. Any pointed or profound expression of thanks for "editorial assistance" is a tipoff that such assistance may well have gone above and beyond. Carl Bernstein's and Bob Woodward's *All the President's Men* begins with an acknowledgment of "appreciation and respect" to their editor, Alice Ellen Mayhew, "whose thought and guidance are reflected on every page;" and general gossip in the publishing industry has it that her rewriting of their text was so extensive that,

BRUCE COOK, *author of* The Beat Generation *and* Listen to the Blues (*Scribner's*), *is on the staff of the* National Observer.

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in effect, she served as their ghost writer. Philip Nobile said as much, in fact, in an article in *New Times,* and it was never exactly denied. In another Watergate book, Jeb Stuart Magruder's *An American Life,* a similar acknowledgment was made to Patrick Anderson ("I would also like to thank Patrick Anderson for his invaluable advice and assistance on this book. . . .") who, it is said, actually did the writing. In this case, Anderson, a veteran Washington novelist, political essayist, and a former presidential assistant during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, wielded considerable influence and probably got Magruder to bring forth a more substantial book than he might otherwise have done.

Ghost writer is more often quantitative than qualitative—a matter of how much, rather than *whether* it is done. Almost no books in America are published in exactly the shape they are in when the author turns in the manuscript. The editor makes suggestions on cuts, rewrites, and restructuring; some "creative" editors take a very active part in the process and like to be in on a book right from the planning stage. So where does editing leave off and ghost writing begin? Probably when another writer is called in to save the manuscript. They may describe his duties as *heavy* editing, or even call it rewriting, but his job is to do whatever needs to be done to make it publishable—even to throwing it out and starting all over.

More often today, however, a collaborator, or ghost writer will be in on the project from its inception—especially on a book which will appear as the work of a celebrity or public figure. The collaborator may even have come up with the idea for the book himself. In such cases, tape recorders are used more and more these days. The collaborator conducts hours and hours of interviews with the author-of-record, taking the information he gets, organizing it, and recasting it freely into readable first-person prose.

An odd phrase, "author-of-record." I picked it up from Sandy Richardson, editor-in-chief at Doubleday, a publishing house that has put out more than its share of ghosted works during the past couple of decades. He indicated to me that with so many books being written by "invisible ghosts"—those who receive no credit or acknowledgment for their efforts—the practice was probably far more prevalent than even I suspected.

But why? "Well, the public does want these stories by public people," Richardson said. "And it makes a difference whether or not the author-of-record seems to be telling it himself. It is simply the most engaging way to tell a story—to make it more personal."

Why are so many of them ghosted, though? Why aren't more of these authors-of-record authors-in-fact? "The awful truth," he said, "is that the art of writing serviceable prose is now in very bad shape in the United States—very bad indeed. I don't know why this should be exactly. It doesn't seem to be so with the English. Politicians, Army men, even business executives over there seem to have a basic facility with the language—enough, anyway, to be able to write their own books. But people in public life here just aren't able to write well, or even serviceably. They just can't write their own stuff."

Sandy Richardson even told of one instance—and there have probably been many others—when a ghost writer was used on a work of fiction. This was when Washington columnist Drew Pearson and novelist Gerald Green got together on the two big-selling novels—*The Senator* and *The President*—that were published as the sole work of Pearson. It all began when Pearson brought an outline to Doubleday of a novel with a central character obviously modeled after his old adversary, Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut. As Richardson tells it, "We really liked Drew's outline, but then he tried a couple of chapters, and we more or less agreed that the writing of fiction was a special skill." Gerald Green, the author of *The Last Angry Man* and a number of other commercially successful novels, was called in. He took the outline, and Drew Pearson threw open his file on Senator Dodd to him. The result was a commercial novel that stayed many weeks on the best seller list. The two deemed the collaboration so successful that they tried it all again with *The President,* not quite as successful, which was published shortly after Pearson's death in 1969.

Except that they were novels, these two were essentially Washington books. What is unusual here is that Pearson was at least nominally a writer, and it seems ironic that he should have required the help of a ghost. But then, so, perhaps, did *Washington Post* reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward.

Ghost writing is a thriving little cottage industry in the nation's capital. In a town teeming with a-literate public men and well stocked with writers, marriages of necessity are in order—and they take place there every day. There are speech writers who see their words gathered between hard covers as the collected papers of this distinguished senator or that. There are reporters who are known as fast workers who will turn out campaign "autobiographies" in a matter of weeks. There are even writers of some independent reputation who, out of esteem for their collaborators or a sense of an important message to be communicated, will occasionally take on ghost-writing assignments.

One of the latter category is Milton Viorst, who has had a newspaper column and has written a number of good political books of his own. He has also written—or collaborated on—*Outsider in the Senate: Sen. Clinton Anderson's Memoirs,* "with Milton Viorst" (as the title page has it). "Here was a man," Viorst said to me, "who had a distinguished career in politics. At the time he was a senator from New Mexico and had been a cabinet member in the Truman administration, but he simply

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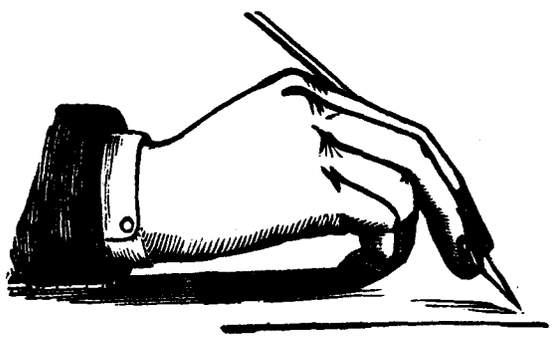
had no talent for writing." What resulted from their collaboration Viorst describes as "a kind of documented nostalgia." And its value? "I think it's real enough, though limited. If it hadn't been written, then history would have been deprived of this marginal addendum to the public record."

Viorst defends his work eloquently: "In a case like this, the ghost writer-collaborator becomes a lot like a lawyer. Just as a man may have a case to present in court, yet lack the knowledge of the law he needs to do it, he may also have a case to present to the public, or a contribution to make to the public record. He needs a writer—a collaborator—for that. He needs help in dealing with publishers and agents, but beyond that, he needs the writer's skills—the vivid use of anecdote, and so on—to plead his case before the public."

There is another, very different kind of Washington book that usually sells far more copies than senators' memoirs, the kind written by the lady they call "the Ghost of Washington." Some sample titles? *White House Chef*, by François Rysavy; *My Thirty Years Backstairs*



at the White House, by Lillian Rogers Parks; and the most famous and successful of all, *My Life with Jacqueline Kennedy*, by Marie Barelli Gallagher. All were written "with" or "as told to" Frances Spaatz Leighton, who specializes in collaborations with the little people who serve the great. What she offers the reading public in them is a kind of backstage view of Presidents and first ladies which seems to assure those who need such assurances that people at the top are only human, too.

Her first effort was *I Married the Veep*, by Jane Barkley, who was then second lady of the United States, for which the only credit Miss Leighton received was pro forma thanks for help in preparing the manuscript. "The book was my idea, too," she declares. "Yet I had to plead with her to get her to cooperate. I kept telling her it was for history." Frances Spaatz Leighton no longer has to plead; her subjects come to her: "If you have to beg them, then they won't give it the time that it requires to do the job. When one of these books hits me, it just has to overwhelm me. We have to be desperate to do it together." And if weeks on the best seller list are any indication, America is desperate to read them once they are written. Not only America, for if we are to judge by such titles as *Ma Vie avec Jackie Kennedy*, *Mijn Leven met Jacqueline Kennedy*, and *Die Unvergesslichen Jahre mit Jackie im Weissen Haus*, the whole world wants to know, too.

Writing about Mrs. Onassis, one is never really very far from show business. But ghost writers get a lot closer than that. Hollywood and New York have their own eminent specters, writers who know what collaboration with an actor or actress can entail—yet are willing to pay the price. And why? For money, of course. Stephen Longstreet is a case in point. He has written a number of "autobiographies"— collaborating with such as Mae West, Hoagy Carmichael, and Pat O'Brien, among others —all done to support the novel-writing he considers his real vocation.

If he has been especially active in this sort of writing, it is not because he has sought the work, he says, but just because he was there in Hollywood and available. He is also a proven commodity; actors feel he understands them. "Yes," says Longstreet, "I understand them, all right. I know they are about the silliest people in the world. They are utterly ignorant of what makes a book, and none of them I've ever worked with could conceivably have done a book on their own. And, oh yes. With actors and actresses it is absolutely essential to use tapes—for two reasons. First of all, they are used to projecting through speech; they put themselves into their conversation, and you can get a sense of the right rhythm and style for the book. The Pat O'Brien book, *Wind at My Back*, wouldn't have been nearly as much like him if I hadn't used a tape recorder." The other reason? "Well, they continually read over your copy and say, 'I didn't say that.' If you've got it on tape, you can play it back to them and prove they did."

Probably the top Hollywood ghost—or one who is at least an erstwhile ghost—is Gerold Frank. Although he hasn't published a collaborative effort since 1960, he probably did more than any other writer to awake in the public the hunger for first-person revelation that now rages so insatiably. The spectacular, best-selling success of books as Lillian Roth's *I'll Cry Tomorrow*, Diana Barrymore's *Too Much Too Soon* and Sheilah Graham's *Beloved Infidel*, all written in collaboration with Frank, probably did more than any dozen others to create the vogue for sensational Hollywood confessions. Although there are shocking revelations aplenty in them, his books are not *merely* sensational. For along with an expectable minimum of purple-writing, and a certain amount of self-justification, there is in them a good deal of real drama, much honest pathos, and occasionally a touch of tragedy. Gerold Frank makes these women matter; he provides them with an ultimate dignity that they were certainly entitled to, but without him would probably never have found.

And what he does for F. Scott Fitzgerald in *Beloved Infidel* is, I think, worthy of the subject, which is saying quite a lot. Ostensibly the story of the sentimental educa-

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tion of Hollywood columnist Sheilah Graham, the book becomes Fitzgerald's when the novelist, who was surviving as a screenwriter during the last few years of his life, became Miss Graham's lover, and in the literal sense, her teacher. By now, this is a familiar story, for the important material given in this book by Sheilah Graham and Gerold Frank has been worked and reworked by scholars, critics and biographers of Fitzgerald, often without much thanks to the source. Of them all, only Edmund Wilson properly acknowledged the real quality of the work itself.

Gerold Frank feels that the right sort of research is what goes to make a successful as-told-to book. "That was certainly what did it with the Sheilah Graham book."

Research? What sort? Not the library kind, surely. "Oh, that, too. I felt to do the book right I had to know Fitzgerald's work as a scholar would. But I had to build up my knowledge of Hollywood at the time to know right questions to ask her—and I must have asked Sheilah herself about 3,000 questions in the course of our interviews. I would go to other people who played roles in this drama of theirs—for instance, Sheilah told me that after a meeting with Nunnally Johnson, Fitzgerald threw himself into the ocean and tried to drown himself. She didn't know what was said in that meeting. I *had* to know, so I went to Johnson.

"And then I feel that places are important in research, too. Sheilah told me about Scott swearing not long before his death he would never drink again. She believed him. She described a kind of cathedral-like atmosphere when he spoke. I asked her to show me where it happened. She took me there. *Where were you? Where was he? Now, speak the words as he spoke them.* All this helps immeasurably in creating the reality of a moment.

"On its simplest level, you know, ghosting is a suspect craft. I've known writers who boasted they ghosted books in two months. Why I gave a minimum of two years to those books of mine. I thought of them as biographies that I wrote with a great deal of help from the subject, an attempt to recreate a life, yet at the same time I was practically becoming the subject, too. Psychoanalyst, father confessor, make whatever analogy you wish, but with each of them I was finishing their sentences for them by the time our interviews were ended."

But, he declares, he'll never do another: "No, I have my own books now. But those three—Lillian, Diana, and Sheilah—they were very important to me, as people, as books. By God, I could say, *they exist.* And with everything so damned evanescent, they exist still."

This is about as much as any writer ever hopes to get from his work—a sense of actuality, a lease on permanence. In this, Gerold Frank, the ghost writer, was certainly not much different from Gerold Frank, the journalist. For the books he has done since the good old days of as-told-to—*The Deed, The Boston Strangler,* and *An American Death*—have been very substantial works of journalism. (Interestingly, his new biography of Judy Garland represents a partial return to the material and attitudes of the earlier books—though it is, of course, written in his own voice.)

Gerold Frank is a writer from whom it is hard to withhold a degree of admiration—and make no mistake, he is the same writer now, with the same writer's conscience, as he was when he was a ghost haunting the best-seller list. I, perhaps like most of you, long nurtured a prejudice against the ghost-written works that crowd the best-seller list week in and week out. As I am writing now, there is no way of knowing exactly what the *New York Times* list will look like by the time you get around to reading this—though probably not too much different from what it was that week I was being sued by Simon and Schuster, and it suddenly looked to me as though nearly every book on it were likely the work of somebody besides the author-of-record. Still, as we grow older, we shed our prejudices one-by-one—or ought to, anyway. And if I am no closer now than before to generating any real enthusiasm for the ghost-written book in the abstract, nevertheless I have come to appreciate a couple of them in the particular. I see the need for ghost writers, though I deplore it. And I cannot help but respect those ghost writers who take their work seriously and have made of it, if not an art, then at least a craft of some utility. Do I seem to be splitting hairs? Not at all. I think of it as hating the sin but loving the sinner. You might think of it that way, too.

JUDITH TATE

PALE SEEDS ILLUMINED

You know that certain car climate
which attends when a man & woman
drive late into the end of a long
trip? Relief and soft anticipation?

All that can be changed by this: a shadow-
colored dog runs out from the night & cracks
his life against their car. He high-
steps across the highway in a goofy
dance of death &, with a final fancy
spasm, rests his broken neck on the road's
black shoulder. Only runlets of blood run.

That sharp report links them to all innocent
dumb death and briefly illumines the pale
seeds planted in their own lethal flesh.
With careful courtesy (read: pity, each
for each), they do not kiss goodnight.

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ETHICS AND FETAL RESEARCH

PETER STEINFELS

For new moral problems, a paucity of analysis

Last December, eleven members of a National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research were sworn in by Health, Education and Welfare Secretary, Caspar W. Weinberger. Established under the National Research Act of July 1974 and mandated to survey the whole field of scientific experimentation with humans, the Commission's first assigned task was to make recommendations to the Secretary of HEW, concerning the regulations of fetal research. The Commission was given a deadline, May 1, 1975; the congressional statute required a moratorium on government-supported research on living fetuses in the interim. By the time this article reaches its readers, therefore, the Commission's findings may be public.

Of course, recommendations from a Commission like this one usually receive prominent coverage in only a few newspapers. Most of the media will ignore them or carry minor reports. And why not? The number of Americans intensely interested in the Commission's work is not large. It consists of one segment of the medical research community, which may be directly affected, another larger group of scientists concerned about public attitudes toward research, of dedicated opponents of abortion, of a smaller number of abortion defenders, and finally that growing, but still limited, group of people concerned with bio-medical ethics generally. To many other citizens, if they read of the Commission's work at all, it will probably strike them as another obscure operation by those innumerable government agencies which issue reports on rainfall, fix rates on utilities, regulate insurance policies, and set standards for wood screws. Not many will recognize the Commission's work for what it is: a significant attempt to guide our civilization into the age when human beings rather than non-human materials will increasingly become the direct object of scientific exploration, an age where medicine and biology promise us immensely attractive benefits—but only with some adjustment of our traditional notions of humanhood, its limits, its obligations, its dignity.

To understand the controversy over fetal research a few distinctions are in order:

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First, what is at stake is research on *living* human fetuses. Research on fetal tissue presents few problems beyond those associated with autopsies on corpses and similar cases.

Second, what is at stake is *non-therapeutic* research on living fetuses. Research meant to save or benefit the particular fetuses on whom the experimental procedures are performed is naturally subject to commonsense calculations of potential risks and benefits, but no one challenges the ethics of allowing a fetus, any more than an adult patient, to undergo such risks if they are necessary for survival or well-being. Controversy arises when fetal research is carried out with no intention of benefiting *this* fetus but rather to gain scientific or medical knowledge which may only be of benefit to some other individuals in the future. Generally non-therapeutic research can only be justified when the human subject volunteers for it, which naturally the fetus is in no position to do.

At least one other distinction should be kept in mind. A fetus which is delivered live, either through abortion or spontaneous miscarrige, may either be viable, i.e., possessing a chance of survival and therefore, in effect, a premature infant, or it may be non-viable, i.e., without a chance of survival given present medical knowledge and technology. At least some people argue that research which would not be justifiable in the case of the viable fetus (or premature infant) should be permitted in the case of the non-viable, living fetus, which is about to die anyway. This, however, raises the problems of (a) establishing criteria for distinguishing viability and non-viability in the midst of changing medical abilities to sustain fetal life, and (b) agreeing on safety margins which would prevent occasional errors.

Fetal research is, of course, not new. It was central in the development of the Salk-polio vaccine. But widespread legal abortion has greatly expanded its scope. The National Commission sponsored a major review of research done on living fetuses during the past decade. Almost all involved chemical or physical intrusion on the fetus or fetal environment while the fetus was *in utero.* Some research has been done in the course of abortion, and a very small percentage has been performed upon living, delivered fetuses. Purposes range from studying normal fetal behavior and

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development to developing means of detecting fetal disease or abnormality. Studies have been made to measure the effects on the fetus of drugs administered to a woman prior to abortion. Some drastic experiments on living, delivered fetuses were aimed at developing techniques for saving future premature infants. The medical gains resulting from fetal research are undeniable, although it is not clear to what extent these gains were due to the most controversial types of research and to what extent the same knowledge could have been obtained through alternative approaches. In addition, of course, many moralists point out that in themselves genuine gains are not sufficient justification for questionable actions.

The moral uncertainty about research on living fetuses arises from two simple facts. First, in philosophy, in American law, and in popular opinion, the status of the fetus is unsettled. Should it be treated as a person, with all the protection and rights this implies? Should it be treated as human tissue which suggests virtually no limits on experimentation? Should it be treated as something akin to a laboratory animal deserving attention at most to questions of pain and a minimal animal dignity? Or does the fetus only fit into some distinctive normal category of its own? In which case, we must define that category in relation to the others, searching out the similarities and differences which would justify similarities and differences in the protections and rights we affirm for the living fetus.

The second distinctive fact about the fetus is that it cannot speak for itself, nor is it clear who else can. We may submit children or unconscious patients to risky experiments when these are necessary for their own survival or well-being, but we do not take the prerogative of "volunteering" such non-consenting individuals to run risks altruistically which can only be of medical benefit to some future group. The problem is compounded in the case of the fetus about to be aborted. Where the mother or both parents together would normally be the obvious spokesperson for a fetus as for a child, the prospect of abortion indicates that the interests of parent and fetus are at least radically divergent if not in total conflict.

The Ramsey Book

The degree to which fetal research poses new moral problems is evidenced by the paucity of extended moral analysis of the question. "The human fetus is . . . a novel subject of investigation in medical ethics, and the discussion has in fact hardly begun," writes Paul Ramsey in his new book, *The Ethics of Fetal Research* (Yale U. "Fastback," $7.95, $2.95 paper, 1975). At least until the National Con mission publishes the views it solicited from about a dozen philosophers, religious ethicists (including Ramsey), and other specialists in ethical aspects of medicine, Ramsey's book will remain the only readily available general treatment. On the one hand, the book is an extension of the lines of argument which Ramsey has set forth during many years and which have made his writings, in books like *The Patient as Person* and *Fabricated Man,* reference points for everyone seriously concerned with medical ethics. On the other hand, *The Ethics of Fetal Research* is an extraordinarily up-to-date feat of writing and publishing. Appearing in early 1975, the book nonetheless contains references to material published as recently as last November. It even contains a lengthy rebuttal of an article by Willard Gaylin and Marc Lappé in the May *Atlantic*: in other words, Ramsey got his rebuttal into print—in book form—before the original article hit the magazine stands This is testimony both to the skill of the Yale "Fastback" editors and to Ramsey's own dedication.

What Ramsey is dedicated to can be put, with the usual risk of oversimplification, into two statements. First, he believes, that since neither the fetus itself nor the parent of the fetus can consent to non-therapeutic fetal research, conducting such research on the living fetus simply because it is going to be aborted anyway offends the basic canons of medical ethics and substitutes a kind of "net-benefits" utilitarianism for medicine's traditional protection of the individual. Second, "at a time when persuasive appeals, heightened emotional utterances, non sequiturs, and opinions plainly dangerous to the moral becoming of mankind have served as surrogates for 'good reasons,' " Ramsey wishes to instill rigor and sober reflection into the public debate.

For anyone deeply concerned with this debate, Ramsey's book is essential reading. For the uninitiated—and I assume that it was in considerable measure intended for the uninitiated—it presents several difficulties. Despite his book's concise history of the fetal research and the efforts in England and the U.S. to resolve it, Ramsey does have a tendency to enter *in medias res*. In part this is intentional. Ramsey realizes he cannot recapitulate the first principles of moral philosophy in a few pages, so he prefers to make his starting points the tradition of medical ethics and the several documents—the Peel Report in Great Britain and the 1973 and 1974 guidelines proposed by the U.S. National Institutes of Health—which attempt to apply that tradition to fetal research. To those unfamiliar with medical ethics, this procedure may seem confusing. To those unwilling to be impressed with the authority of traditional medical ethics, it may appear that Ramsey is begging a number of basic questions. I do not know how Ramsey could have solved this problem within the space and time available to him; it remains a problem nonetheless.

Among the basic questions passed over swiftly by this method is that referred to earlier, the status of the fetus. In searching for ways of thinking about our moral

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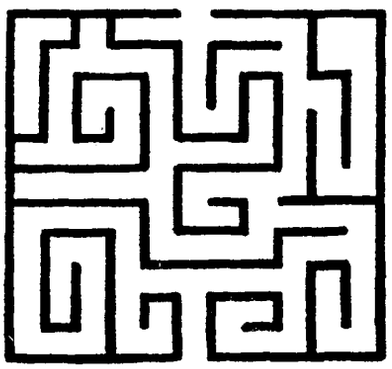
obligations to the living fetus, especially the fetus spontaneously aborted or scheduled for induced abortion, Ramsey usefully compares it to the unconscious patient, the dying patient, and the condemned prisoner. All these categories, however, are unquestionably human *persons,* and that is precisely what many people question in the case of the fetus.

Consider the opposing argument. In testimony submitted to the National Commission, Richard Wasserstrom, a lawyer and philosopher, agreed with Ramsey's view that the living fetus was clearly more than tissue or experimental animal. Wasserstrom also rejected the notion of treating the fetus as a full person. He argued that it constituted a moral category of its own. This category, he said, had more in common with persons than with tissue or animals, but what it had in common was the potentiality of becoming a person. Since the special status of the fetus rested in this potentiality, to destroy this potentiality by abortion was, according to Wasserstrom, "a morally worrisome act." But once abortion or impending abortion had removed the factor



of potentiality to become a person from the calculation, then Wasserstrom saw many of the objections to research on living fetuses disappear.

At the moment of my writing, it is precisely this question which promises to give the National Commission its most difficult moments. Is the impending demise of a living fetus a morally relevant fact which should enter into ethical judgments about permissible research? By early April, one group on the Commission appeared to have settled upon a position slightly less restrictive than Ramsey's. This position, articulated in submitted testimony by the moral theologian Richard McCormick, S.J., and LeRoy Walters of the Kennedy Institute Center for Bioethics, would permit certain types of non-therapeutic research, carrying minimal risk, on living fetuses. No experimental procedures, however, should be done to fetuses aborted or scheduled to be aborted which would not also be done on fetuses which will be carried to term. This position, in other words, does not consider the impending death of a fetus to be a morally relevant fact which might justify greater latitude for non-therapeutic research.

A historical example might clarify the significance of this argument. In the 1960's a vaccine was developed for rubella. (Serious congenital abnormalities often resulted when women were infected with the rubella virus during pregnancy.) The vaccine was found safe and effective for adults and children, but its safety when administered to pregnant women (logical candidates for the vaccine) was unknown. Would the vaccine have the same dire results as the infection itself? Tests on rhesus monkeys showed it would not. However, tests on women about to undergo abortions showed that the vaccine did cross the placenta and infect the human fetus.

The McCormick-Walters position would not have allowed such research. If the previous studies had shown the further use of the vaccine to be of minimal risk (as the rhesus monkey tests appeared to do), then trials on pregnant women should not have discriminated between fetuses scheduled for abortion and those to be carried to term.

Other members of the Commission could not accept this position, though no one seemed to take the diametrically opposed stance that once abortion is decreed then anything goes, or the utilitarian position that the end does justify the means as long as aggregate benefits to society outweigh the harms. Some members apparently felt it would be unethical *not* to carry out research like that on the rubella vaccine first on fetuses scheduled for abortion rather than risk the future well-being of fetuses that will be brought to term. Some agreed with McCormick-Walters that both fetuses scheduled for abortion and those which will be carried to term should be treated similarly, but then qualified this by arguing that impending abortion is relevant to defining similar treatment; risks which could be called "minimal" for a fetus with a life expectancy of a few weeks are not necessarily "minimal" for a fetus which will develop into a child or adult and carry the burden of abnormality.

The National Commission's findings involve other complicated issues, that of consent, for instance, or of defining viability with more or less precision and with wider or narrower margins for safety. How specific should national guidelines be, how much should be left to local discretion, how should ethical review committees be constituted, what mechanisms should be set in place for periodically updating the entire discussion? The answers will be found, either explicitly or implicitly, in the final report.

Even without knowing the final outcome of the Commission's deliberations on fetal research, it is a pretty safe prediction to say that they will not satisfy anybody. They certainly will not satisfy the more adamant opponents of abortion. They will probably not satisfy Paul Ramsey. On the other hand, they will probably not satisfy a segment of the medical research community who bristle at the very idea of any public regulation in this area.

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From what I have observed, however, the Commission has gone about its very difficult task in an extraordinarily thorough and diligent manner. The sessions I attended were not quite Plato's Academy, but they were a far cry from congressional committee hearings or even a number of scholarly conferences in this area I have observed. The Commissioners had done their homework, were willing to talk across professional and ideological lines, posed questions which revealed a tutored understanding of the issues. Insofar as the National Commission's recommendations are restrictive of research, it will be accused of conservativism and an anti-scientific outlook. Insofar as they are permissive, it will be accused of yielding to "the research imperative."

Let the accusations be what they will. I can only say that if the Commission recommendations end up in one camp or other, it will not be because the Commisssioners landed there unwittingly or thoughtlessly. The Commission may not agree with the substance of Paul Ramsey's conclusions in *The Ethics of Fetal Research*, but it is my impression that it has gone a long way in fulfilling Ramsey's hope that the level of the debate be raised.

REPORTING ON INDOCHINA

PRESS

One of these days—perhaps soon—we are going to pick up our morning papers and see, there on the front page, the last photograph to be taken by an American in South Vietnam. I think I know what its subject will be: a U.S. Marine kicking a South Vietnamese out the doorway of the last American plane to leave Saigon.

I'm sure I'm not the only person who's been thinking about this recently, and I hope I'm not the only person to find the image upsetting, but the subject—one of the very few about which there is still time to do something—has not been much discussed in public. Reporting from Indochina since the first of the year has been absolutely first-rate, fully up to the magnitude of the event—I am thinking especially of Sydney Schanberg in Phnom Penh for the *New York Times*— but the plight of our South Vietnamese friends is being more or less deliberately overlooked.

Part of the problem is that so many people would instinctively react to that last sentence by saying: they're not any friends of mine! One of the principal arguments against the war has been the nature of the South Vietnamese government itself: inefficient, undemocratic, cruel and corrupt. Having charged for so many years that our allies did not deserve our support, it is difficult for opponents of the war to turn around now and argue that we ought to rescue them. The result is that we are treating the issue of their rescue as if the only questions of importance were (1) do they deserve it? and (2) is it only a Kissinger-Ford trick to get us back into the war?

The war in Vietnam has always raised the most difficult sorts of questions for journalists. The problem is not that journalists are by nature morally insensitive or politically indifferent but that they must write before they have had time to think. The ideal of objectivity is not based on the premise that all positions are of equal value, but on the practical fact that life is complicated and time short. The press has often been blamed for McCarthyism, and especially for reporting McCarthy's first West Virginia speech without bothering to find out if there really were X number of Communists in the State Department. But really, what were reporters to do? Hold on to the story for six weeks while they checked it out? The truth is that most news stories demand to be reported in simple declarative sentences: Senator McCarthy charged today there are "X number of Communists in the State Department." Period. There is time for nothing else.

That is the way McCarthy's claims were at first reported, and that is the way the war in Vietnam was reported, too. After awhile a note of skepticism about official statements began to appear, and eventually reporters energetically and critically examined not only the conduct but the premises of the war. I don't mean that journalists have learned to be perfect (who's perfect?) but that they have learned enough, and are self-confident enough, to judge official statements as soon as they are made. When the precarious military situation in Cambodia and South Vietnam began to unravel early this year, reporters effectively countered, with information, the Ford administration's attempts to reduce the question of continued support to one of honor alone.

There is no doubt in my mind that the United States has some sort of moral obligation to the South Vietnamese and Cambodians we induced to fight, but the nature of the obligation is subject to reality. When the administration argued military aid was necessary to prevent an immediate collapse of the Lon Nol government, reporters in Cambodia wrote persuasively that the end was inevitable and more aid would only mean more war and more suffering. When the administration tentatively suggested that the collapse of the South Vietnamese Army in the northern two-thirds of the country was the fault of the Congress, reporters pointed out that ARVN had abandoned $1 billion in munitions and matériel, that Hue and Da Nang were surrendered virtually without a shot, that the South Vietnamese could not maintain the equipment they already had, that dozens of helicopters were sitting idle on airfields, that South

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Vietnam's air force—the world's fourth largest—had hardly entered the fighting. Finally, when the administration pointed to the refugees as evidence the South Vietnamese people were voting against the Communists with their feet, reporters wrote that in fact it was fear of being caught between the armies and a kind of crowd hysteria which had uprooted them. In almost every instance, I would argue, reporters in South Vietnam and Phnom Penh have demonstrated more realism, deeper human sympathy and a truer sense of American interests than the administration in Washington.

This maturity is the result of a long history of discrepancies between American policy and reality in Vietnam. Through bitter experience journalists have learned to depend on what they, themselves, know to be true. The question of helping South Vietnamese to leave the country, however, is a new one and reporters have been cautious and even nervous in dealing with it. One reason, of course, is that reporters know very little about the Communist side and cannot judge on the basis of their own knowledge claims that a Saigon defeat will be followed by a punitive "bloodbath." Some people say the Communists will kill everybody from Thieu's bootblack on up. Other people say the Communists will establish a government of national reconciliation and reeducate their former enemies with gentle persuasion and the poetry of Ho Chi Minh. I don't know who's right, but I do know that the consequences of error on this question will not be suffered by us.

Another reason for the reticence of journalists on this matter is healthy doubt about the administration's purpose. Congressmen, anti-war activists and journalists alike seem to fear that an energetic evacuation program by the U.S. might be used as a roundabout way of reentering the war. So far, Congressional reaction has been thoroughly negative to President Ford's request for authority to use American troops in the evacuation of South Vietnamese as well as Americans when the time comes, as come it will.

What does this mean?

It means that the only South Vietnamese who escape will be those who stole enough American money to buy their way out at the end. The leaders will probably find a way to leave but the vast majority of the Vietnamese who fought on our side, who served in the government or in the police or were employed by the CIA will be left to their fate. I was talking about this with my friend Tim Ferris recently and he said, "If they deserve what they get, then what do we deserve? And if they don't deserve it, what are we going to do about it?"

The answer, unless the question is raised widely and energetically now, while there is still time, is nothing. This is absolutely our last chance to do the right thing in this war but we have been wrong about everything else and I'm afraid we're going to be wrong about this, too.

One of these days soon the last divisions of the South Vietnamese Army are going to melt away, just like those in the North. President Thieu will get on a plane with his 16 tons of gold and the U.S. Marines will guard the exit of the last Americans. Watching them go from the runway will be some skinny government clerk, some quiet, white-shirted fellow who can't believe the people he served so long have left him behind. And then, too late as always in this war, we will begin to ask ourselves how we could have done such a thing, when really, our intentions were so *good.*

THOMAS POWERS

FELLOW TRAVELER

THE SCREEN

A scene that occurs midway through Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Passenger* is typical. David Locke (Jack Nicholson) has been reported dead while filming a documentary in North Africa, and back in London his wife is watching some of his footage as his producer tracks down a man named Robertson who stayed in the hostel where David died. The footage is of a witch doctor who suddenly announces he can make David's interview more "honest" and moves off camera. The camera pans to David, who looks non-plussed at whatever the witch doctor is doing. But before we learn what that is, the producer returns, and David's wife, switching off the movieola, asks for his report on Robertson. "He's disappeared," the producer replies, absently switching the interview back on just as David is moving out of camera range too.

The producer is referring to Robertson, but we are distracted by the applicability of his remark to the witch doctor and to David. It was the witch doctor who first "disappeared" here, and this is what established our expectations in the scene. We thought we would find out what he was up to. But far from being explained itself, his disappearance has only led to other disappearances. Often in Antonioni's films, as in this scene, what begins for us in suspense ends in frustration. Scenes advance by a kind of geometric progression, multiplying images with such complexness that we are scarcely able to keep up. The narrative line begins to disintegrate, to be swamped under the load of pictures, to get lost in the labyrinth of associations. Like many earlier Antonioni films, *The Passenger* is ostensibly a mystery story and a thriller. But like the witch doctor's disappearance, the mystery in these films is in the end always compounded rather than solved, and we are left, plot-less, to struggle with the mere images that remain.

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This is the difficulty of Antonioni's films, then, but also their beauty and appeal. Individual shots detach themselves from the story much as a brilliant line will detach itself from a poem, and it is the shot, rather than any character or scene, that stays with us after the film. It is also the shot, the single image, that must make sense before anything else can. In *The Passenger*'s early scenes, for instance, the quality that Antonioni wants to impart to human affairs, their fluid uncertainty, is suggested by a camera gesture more than by what is said or done. The fact is that the person who has died in the African desert is Robertson. At the film's beginning David finds Robertson, the hostel's only other guest, dead in his room, and on impulse David decides to trade places with the dead man by switching their passport photos. As David sits at a table with the passports, the camera pans from him to a window through which we see him again, apparently talking to Robertson sometime earlier. When their conversation ends, the camera continues its pan around the room until it arrives back at David once more working on the passports.

What Antonioni has done here is create a flashback not by the customary means of editing, but by camera movement. That the flashback begins and ends with a pan rather than a cut throws us off at first. Past and present flow together. Objective reality overlaps for the moment a daydream projected by memory. Without editing to mark the time lapse, we have the peculiar illusion that the same man—not only the character but the physical body of the actor—is in two places at once. Yet within the confusion this rendering of the flashback causes, the sense that it makes is also apparent. The flashback makes the relationship between the two characters into an extraordinary, seamless loop. That disconcerting illusion which the panning shot gives us is, we gradually realize, what Antonioni's film is all about.

Done as one take, as a continuum, the flashback makes the assumption of Robertson's identity into a kind of metamorphosis, and imagery in the film thereafter goes through constant metamorphoses as well. As David pursues appointments found in Robertson's date book, the young men who are David's guides in Africa become the old men he repeatedly asks directions of in Europe. The primitive architecture of the desert gives way to the modern fantasy of the Gaudi buildings David visits in Barcelona. The fair-complected wife he abandons in London is replaced by a dark-haired girl (Maria Schneider) he meets in Spain. Shots made through plate glass become shots reflected in plate glass. The cross members between the panes in ordinary windows become ever more prominent, until glass houses seen early in the film acquire the aspect of cages later on.

In the end that loop of camera movement we saw at the beginning reappears too, transforming itself into a single dolly shot that lasts, without a cut, over five minutes. Like the moving camera in these two shots, or the images that so often reflect back at us in this film from mirrors and windows, David himself has only gone around in a circle since assuming Robertson's identity. Like the network of guides through which David tried to contact some guerrillas in the desert, the series of appointments in Robertson's book leads David nowhere and reveals nothing. Incidents and remarks that occurred in the desert at the beginning reoccur with increasing frequency as we reach the end. Far from escaping his life, David has simply repeated it by becoming Robertson. Past and present really have turned out to be a seamless loop.

Perhaps this is why David keeps the last appointment in Robertson's book, even though he now knows Robertson was a gun runner marked for assassination. As David lies down in his hotel room in the village where the date book has brought him, the camera stands at the foot of the bed staring impassively out a grated window. Outside is a parking area, a bit of featureless, primeval, arid ground set aside for a desolate, modern purpose—the sort of landscape we have traversed with Antonioni before, from the rock island in *L'Avventura* to *Zabriskie Point*.

Like the cage into which the grated window turns David's room, the characters and events that crisscross the parking area are all ones we have seen before. As we watch their pantomime, the camera passes through the bars, around the area outside, and back to the grate, through which we now see David once more, dead in his room. Across the way is a bullring, and once or twice on the sound track, faintly, we hear the trumpet music of the corrida. But we remain outside the arena and do not see the main event. Although the entire story has somehow brought David to this death, Antonioni directs his camera elsewhere while it occurs.

Curious as this may seem, we are by this point in the film accustomed to such unfinished drama and tangential views. In the opening scenes, when David is looking for guides to lead him to the guerrillas, we are always surprised at who the guide is. While David develops a rapport with one man, someone else slips unnoticed into the Landrover to direct him. When that someone jumps from the car upon sighting a camel on the desert, we look to the camel driver. But he passes without a glance, and it is again someone else, a man from a hut on the edges of our field of vision, who takes David on. From these incidents through the inchoate drama of the witch doctor to the end of the film, the protagonist is never the man we at first think.

In the long dolly shot at the end, the protagonist again turns out to be someone else—turns out to be not David, but Antonioni himself. In a movie whose premise is an exchange of identities, this is the final exchange. In this regard, of course, our view in the closing scene is not

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tangential at all. It is central. Antonioni's point of view, his camera and imagination, have become the central event, displacing the murder of David. It is in such remarkable acts of self-assertion that Antonioni's films differ most from the conventional sort of thriller we are used to. In conventional filmmaking, the point of view is manipulated to maintain the story. In all Antonioni's filmmaking, including the last scene of *The Passenger*, the story is manipulated, or violated if necessary, to express the point of view. If Antonioni's films are difficult to take in, this is perhaps the reason. His characters and plot are to him only images he must somehow adapt to the subject his films are really always about—himself.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

THE ELUSIVE EMILY

SAUL MALOFF

The Life of Emily Dickinson

RICHARD B. SEWELL

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $30

"Our Emily," the "Queen Recluse" of Amherst, the dotty priestess dressed all in white, a spinster of course, doubtless a virgin, peering invisibly from behind the curtains of the upstairs window, conversing with a rare guest from the safe distance of another room or unseen from the other side of a half-open door or from the head of the staircase, the maiden lady, Auntie Emily, who went so far in her passionate avoidance of contact with the world as to lower sweets on a string to the waiting children below, who left her house one time only in the last twenty years of her life and then only to call at the house next door to join her brother and his wife in mourning the death of their young son, her beloved nephew, a brief visit that left her in a state of prolonged nervous prostration.

She was all nerves and the world rubbed so abrasively upon them she couldn't bring herself to see a caller because "my own Words so chill and burn me." When Mabel Loomis Todd, a close friend of the family, in fact her brother's lover, the woman who was her first editor and without whose devoted labors we might not now have the poems at all—when Mrs. Todd came to the house to sing for her, for her alone, Emily listened unseen from the next room.

And yet, however oblique, secretive, elusive, spectral to the world she was, Emily Dickinson, as Richard Sewell, her latest and by far her most authoritative biographer, remarks, "establishes an intimacy with her readers as do few other poets," an intimacy which "leads to possessiveness." Immediately following the appearance of the posthumous 1890 *Poems*, she became a cult figure. Mrs. Todd's daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham, who in her turn made a career of Emily, once said acerbicly of the devotees, "They all think they own her." She thought *she* owned her. (For years I thought *I* owned her, and at moments I still think so. Owned her: all mine! Can anyone imagine *owning* Yeats? Eliot? Pound? Stevens? Auden? Or, for that matter, Sappho? Plath? Marianne Moore—though here interesting correspondences present themselves?)

Richard Sewell has better claim; yet even he, in possession of all the available materials, everything now known flowing directly from or impinging on her life, must proceed toward her by indirection, by encirclement, by deduction and inference, cautious surmise and measured speculation—by the multiple perspective provided by the poems and letters, diaries and journals, hers and others', by overviews of the town and time, background and family, affinities and sympathies, sources and influences, warp and woof, the era's pervasive ideas and events private and public. Around the blurred white space of the densely composed painting the vivid figures of the group portrait cluster, all of them turned at various angles in her direction as if their own concentrated mass and volume could evoke the obscurely-drawn, missing central figure; but naturally, the design can only make us more acutely aware of the space she occupies in the frame, though that space vibrates and commands our attention, as it does theirs.

This is fanciful and hyperbolic; but in dealing with her, one may be forgiven. In fact, Sewell, a scrupulous, tactful, reticent scholar decently reluctant to transgress the bounds of the known, inundates us with everything, anything remotely bearing on the life of his subject, in a massive attempt to fix and demythicize her once and for all—to force the mysterious "Isolato" out of her closet and into, if not the glare of light, then at least some penetrable shadow where in our presence we can hear a recognizable voice and discern a substantial figure. If Sewell is to avoid the grossness of pop psychoanalysis, the blandishments of wild self-indulgent speculation and sentimental fictionalizing, which can only perpetuate the myth in other forms, how then, since so little can be solidly known of her and she everywhere

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eludes the grasp, is he to conduct what Henry James called the "devilish art of biography" which is, James added in italics, so "*thinning*. It simplifies even while seeking to enrich."?

By *critical mass* appears to be Sewell's reply: to rout the shadows, shrink the zone of the unknown by thickly populating it. Who were her ancestors? Her immediate family? Friends and acquaintances? Servants? How was she perceived by others? What did she read, say, listen to, think about—the Civil War, for example, which exploded in the mid-span of her life? (She had as little to say of it as Jane Austen did of the Napoleonic Wars. Save for one marvelous, enigmatic remark: "War," she wrote to Col. Higginson, "feels to me an oblique place.") What, when she wasn't writing or reading, did she *do*? What was Amherst like? New England in the decline of Puritanism? America in the middle decades of the 19th Century? How nearly can we account for this wayward, bizarre, unaccountable poet and woman?

By this strategy, Emily doesn't get born until the beginning of the second volume. Her advent is prepared for by small-scale biographies of her paternal grandfather, who died when she was a child and was the first notable Dickinson, a founder of Amherst College, a prominent lawyer and man of affairs, and finally a pathetic failure; her father, also a prominent lawyer and politician, Treasurer of the College and a celebrated figure in her legend—the stern, tyrannical autocrat, a kind of Mr. Barrett of Wimpole Street (though he was nothing of the sort, as Sewell makes clear); her decent, ineffectual, nondescript mother; her loyal, devoted, eccentric sister Lavinia; and, above all, her brother Austin, his wife Susan, their catastrophic marriage, and the Todds, Mabel the mistress of Austin's last years, Todd the complaisant husband who to alert the adulterous lovers of his approach whistled an air from "Martha" on his return home from the observatory at Amherst. Similarly, in the second volume, herself perceived in relation to others, the others solid presences, herself glimpsed flickeringly, those glimpses adding to rather than clarifying the mystification.

From the beginning, immediately after the 1890 *Poems*, indeed during her lifetime, the myth of the apparition in white required another figure—a man: unrequited love, her stricken heart, utter desolation. Although she was anything but a widely celebrated figure herself (seven poems were published during her lifetime, all of them anonymously), she was a conspicuous local girl, eldest daughter of one of the most prominent families in town and a "character" by any reckoning. How better to account for her, especially then, than simply to reduce her to that stock character, the lovelorn lady pining her life away, and thereby making her our familiar, a pitiable absurd figure, but our own—condescend to while standing in awe of her. Alone in her room, she was "Our Emily"; riven, she was a kind of heroine—of Victorian melodrama, the stuff of banal myth, in any case domesticated, a colorful landmark for provincial ladies of "dimity convictions" (her own scathing characterization). No town would want to be without one.

No matter that the men were improbable: the preacher Charles Wadsworth, whom she couldn't have seen more than a few times; the elderly newspaper editor Samuel Bowles; the dim Judge Lord, twenty years her senior, rather stodgy and married to boot over much of the span of their friendship. No, they simply won't do, not a one of them, not a demon lover in the lot. Evidence of powerful feeling abounds in her writings, most violently in the so-called "Master" letters found among her papers; but that that feeling was directed at any of the leading candidates for the role—or at anyone else in the actual world—seems most unlikely.

Sewell presents all the possible evidence and maintains a judicious neutrality. I, however, cannot. It's not merely that Wadsworth, Bowles, Lord won't, no matter how we glaze or chisel them, plausibly sit for the portrait; far more than that, cast in that role, they violate one's sense of her. "Jacob versus Esau," she once wrote a friend about something that was momentarily disturbing her, "was a trifle in Litigation, compared to the Skirmish in my Mind." Another time she spoke of the "campaign inscrutable of the Interior." Now that may seem a touch excessive, but it is not unrepresentative. The failed poems (and many of them fail, many of them fail ludicrously) are filled with billowing feeling and nothing anywhere in sight on which it can alight; the letters, typically, roil with emotion wildly in excess of the occasion. (Conversely, in the great poems and in the great letters, emotion is miraculously contained.) The essential drama of her life was the drama in and out of her mind; and she herself played all the parts, *all* the parts. Her girlhood letters to Susan Gilbert (later Mrs. Austin Dickinson) are as much love letters as any she wrote in later life; she was as much "in love" then as later; more so. Tremendous emotional pressure expended itself in a poem or letter, often both, as her letters are filled with poems and poem-fragments. As the letters to Susan vibrate with the intensities of adolescent crush, no less do the letters of the later years—despite the rises and falls, an astonishing consistency in the nature, quality, level of feeling.

Always one must make allowances for the perfervid, flamboyant epistolary style and sentimental conventions of the day—see, for an example unsettling to the contemporary ear tuned to hear the dissonances of unconscious self-revelation, the letters of her female votaries to George Eliot, to *us* nothing less than flaming avowals of adoration, the language of decidedly sexual love. In the sanctum of her room, which was her world ("To shut our eyes is Travel," she once said) Emily Dickinson's soul, in the language of the famous poem, selected its own society, then shut the door. Given her aristocratic temperament, her disdain of the run of her townspeople, that "society" was severely exclusive, peopled by those near at hand who could be transfigured by the forge of her need into the dram-

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atis personae she required: Friend, Sister, Soulmate, Father, Mentor, Lover, Master. (Mentor! Having no other, she cast in the role poor, plodding philistine Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who couldn't begin to make heads or tails of her or her poetry and could only scratch his head, wither in her fires.) In her early twenties she wrote her brother after first meeting some cousins: "The Newmans seem very pleasant, but they are not *like us.* What makes a few of us so different from others. It's a question I often ask myself." When she was twenty she wrote her beloved Susan of the "fancy that we are the only poets, and everyone else is *prose.*"

We cannot and will not bear this! Why won't she open the door for us after we've come all this way? Include us, if not others, in her society? Craving inclusion, needing her acceptance, presence and love all the more as she persists in disdaining ours, we're puzzled and enraged, ourselves stricken by unrequited love, we are bereaved. Why doesn't she come downstairs, get out of the house, take tea with friends and neighbors, receive visitors, accept invitations to the ball? Why can't she be like us instead of sitting upstairs day after day, year after year, scribbling those impenetrable little poems, writing her letters to the world?

She chose not to, and we won't have it. The world rubbed her the wrong way —and *we* are the rubbing world. Asked incessantly *why*, her sister Vinnie, not quite understanding the world's bewilderment, said it was "only a happen"—early on Emily saw less and less of the world and by gradual stages over the whole of her adult life saw hardly anything of it. That's how Emily was. You prefer brown, she white; you bustle about, she stays indoors, which was world enough, "but the Grounds are ample." Invited to Boston by Higginson to meet other writers she said, in her uppity way: "I never thought of conceiving that I could ever have the slightest approach to such a want in all future time. I don't care for roving." An impossible child-woman! Maddening hauteur. Impenetrable.

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The weakness is ours, of course—our voyeurism, our prurience. If only she had gratified us by marrying—marrying someone, anyone, even Judge Lord, having so much as one child, stillborn or doomed to die young, there would never have been myth or mystery, and we could forgive her her strange voyage from vault to vault. But no, nothing, she declines our least request, will accede to nothing we ask of her—not a single misbegotten affair, not even a proper chaste passionate friendship of the nineteenth-century sort, an ill-fated operatic love, for a "left-over of the Brontës," as someone said of her. We can't tolerate the blank wall, the closed door, so we repair to the keyhole, only to find there is none.

In the face of enduring mystery there is something in us that will not let it be; we must always grasp beyond our reach for explanatory "facts," as if facts account for states, outer for inner. The facts we reach for are the myths we make. Sewell, that exemplary man and biographer, is confident scholars will yet stumble on new material. Ten thousand new letters will not bring us one phase-of-the-moon closer to the center of her turbulences.

"Half-cracked," the perplexed Higginson said of her, in consternation. ". . . In your half-cracked way you chose," writes Adrienne Rich in a 1964 poem, "silence for entertainment, chose to have it out at last/on your own premises."

The great and abiding mystery is the canon itself—the poems and the letters: that, in a poetic age of "message and uplift and . . . lilting matters" better attuned to Longfellow, she contrived her weird, stately, haunting, unprecedented music and created resonances which, a century later, are still beyond our circumferences.

BOOKS

MOSAIC LAW IN NEW YORK

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

The Power Broker
ROBERT A. CARO
Knopf, $17.95

I met Robert Moses once five years ago, and I shall not forget him. I was writing the history of the *Brooklyn Eagle* and I had gone to his Triborough Bridge Authority office on Randall's Island to question him on his alliance with *Eagle* editor Cleveland Rodgers in promoting his key projects—the Triborough Bridge Authority and the great 1930s network of work-project highways that linked downtown Brooklyn to the reaches of Long Island and Long Island itself to the other boroughs of New York.

He sat behind his desk old and deaf but still looming large—like a giant sea turtle that had just crawled out of the ocean to claim his beach—and gave me, in a statement that revealed as much about his own concept of the American mobility dream as it did about Brooklyn, one of the central insights of my thesis: that the trouble with Brooklyn was that "everybody was the same size." The "big" people who "made it" moved out.

I finished my book convinced that if Brooklyn was indeed dead, Moses, with the *Eagle* cheering him on, had helped kill it, since those highways, rather than binding the community together, had drained those "big" people with cars out of the borough into another way of life.

As I settled into my own new life in New York, Robert Moses touched my life in other ways. Once I had mastered the Bruckner Expressway and Triborough Bridge (50¢), with luck I could drive from Fordham to mid-Manhattan in twenty-five minutes, when the subway, walking and waiting time included, might take an hour. Or,

on a hot-August morning, with a car, the Throggs Neck Bridge and three parkways, I could make Jones Beach in forty minutes. There I could run miles through the bronzed crowds along the ocean's edge, plunging in and out of the surf when I grew tired. But now I have finally finished Robert Caro's *The Power Broker* and have another sense of the man and his work—a realization of how the same hideous, roaring highway, Moses' Cross-Bronx Expressway, that saves me a few minutes on the way to New Jersey or the beach, may have killed the Bronx. (A recent research project on Bronx Puerto Rican drug addicts by Fordham's Joseph R. Fitzpatrick, S.J., names the Expressway as a symbol and cause of the borough's deterioration.) Maybe in the Bronx too everyone would be the same size.

The Power Broker is more than just one book. It is the latest and largest (1162 pages) spawn of the new *hubris* school of historical journalism—the W. A. Swanberg biography of Luce, David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* and, to a lesser degree, Gay Talese's family portraits of the *Times*

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and the Mafia. And it is an extension of the old muckraking, an application of Lincoln Steffens' dictum that "Whenever anything extraordinary is done in American municipal politics, whether for good or for evil, you can trace it invariably to one man." Before us parade faceless and remorseless institutions created and driven by idealists and geniuses gone cynical, selfish or sour. If only, we are expected to say, this personal brilliance could have served justice and truth. But it can't, we are asked to conclude, because truth, justice and the taste of power cannot mix; and the Luce, Johnson, McNamara, Bundy or Moses who paused to think through and weigh the full human implications of his public policies would not be the giant he is but just another hand-wringing bureaucrat, and no fitting subject for a superbook.

So Caro, an investigative reporter for *Newsday*, has studied urban planning at Harvard, labored seven years and brought forth: the richest social and political history of New York City's last fifty years; the story of a city systematically destroying itself through the weakness of the timid men who allowed Moses to push them around, the incompetence of those who could not compete with his skill and vision, and the rapacity of the accepted building policies that consistently sacrificed the city's soul—its neighborhoods and its heritage—to the fast buck and the car; the personal story of a big man who was often very small.

If Caro's work is most valuable as a collection of colorful and well-documented stories about neighborhood change, highway and housing legislation, and political characters like Al Smith, Fiorello H. LaGuardia and even Vincent R. Impellitteri, it is less successful where it is most ambitious—as a moral tale. We wonder sometimes how any one man could be as magnificent as Robert Moses. He strode the Long Island shorelines, hinterlands and baronial estates; and, by knowing how to promote his park plans in the press, write legislation and exploit his good-buddy relationship with Al Smith, he seized those lands for the public. Sometimes he began bulldozing and building even before he had authorization and money, knowing that once the first stake had been pounded and money has been spent no one would have the nerve to stop him. He revolutionized park building by forming a park *system* all over New York City and State—not traditional silvan retreats but elaborate recreation areas with golf courses, ball fields and pools.

With his bridges and parkways he transformed Westchester, Staten Island and Long Island from country counties and isolated islands into functioning parts of the larger metropolitan organism, the bedrooms of the managerial middle class that made their money in Manhattan and their homes where they wouldn't have to face the problems this sprawl was bringing on.

And it is hard to imagine how any one man could be as bad. He physically assaulted, smeared and broke people

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who stood in his way. He tried to keep blacks away from his beaches and he tried to deny his own Jewishness. He turned his own staff into sniveling toadies. Before F.D.R., whom he scorned and called "a pretty poor excuse for a man," finally outflanked him, he tried to build a Brooklyn-Battery Bridge that would have wrecked the southern tip of Manhattan. For no good apparent reason he wiped out 159 buildings and 1530 apartments

(*Continued on page 121*)

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light
within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into
the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love
within the Heart of God
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NEW YORK BOOKS

There aren't enough good books about New York City. Two of the best, *The AIA* [American Institute of Architects] *Guide to New York City,* edited by Norval White and Elliot Willensky (Macmillan) and Henry Robb Ellis' breezy popular history, *The Epic of New York City* (Coward-McCann), are now out of print and just a few years out of date; and no comparable works have come along to take their places.

To fill the gap some publishers are reissuing old books for their nostalgia value, like *The 1866 Guide to New York City* (Schocken, $2.75 paper), or keeping treasures like Mary Black's *Old New York in Early Photographs* (Dover), Nathan Silver's *Lost New York* (Schocken) and John A. Kouwenhoven's *The Columbia Historical Portrait of New York* (Harper & Row) available in paperback editions.

Meanwhile, in the last few months, a renewed interest in the old city has brought forth a few new titles. The *New York Times'* McCandlish Phillips has gathered some of his more picturesque feature writing in *City Notebook: A Reporter's Portrait of a Vanishing New York* (Liveright, $10.50)—sensitive, compassionate stories that measure the sun's hour-by-hour retreat from the gutters of Times Square, that climb the back stairways and knock on locked doors to discover the diverse, sometimes bizarre, individuals who give the lie to the myth that New York is an impersonal town. He interviews a professional page-turner for piano accompanists: "I'm the man behind the man behind the man." He walks the East River docks once swarming with life and gives a boost to the still-uncompleted South Street Seaport Museum project, which—it is hoped—will restore three dead blocks of nineteenth-century buildings to their 1800s charm.

William H. Hemp's *New York Enclaves* (Clarkson N. Potter, $6.95), a collection of 26 word and pen sketches of remnants of the old city, is a very good idea. It helps to have his list of quaint neighborhoods and useful information in his text on little hideouts like Patchin Place and Sniffen Court (just two blocks from the *Commonweal* office). If only his prose were not so clichéd and his illustrations of the streets—many of which I have visited—not so sentimental and children's bookish.

Three recent volumes in particular recapture and preserve in haunting and sometimes lyrical photographs both the grime and glory of the city's past and the majesty of at least some of its buildings. The most specialized is *Skyscraper Styles: Art Deco in New York,* with essays by Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter (Oxford University Press, $20). Art Deco was American architecture's attempt to be at home in the Jazz Age, and its expression— through ornament, lush textures and color achieved by mixing stone, terra-cotta, brick and metal—that looking at buildings should be fun. Ms. Bletter's essay traces the influence of the 1925 Paris Exposition, Fritz Lang's movie sets and Frank Lloyd Wright; and there is a selected list of 115 Art Deco buildings (1923-1939), plus handsome plates—from the Chrysler Building to Horn and Hardart. There is a chintzy decadence about many of these places, particularly the interiors, but many of them *are* more fun to look at than the World Trade Center and the uniform glass slabs now sprouting up along Sixth Avenue.

"It seemed to me that a reporter was the highest and noblest of all the callings," Jacob Riis wrote, "no one could sift wrong from right as he, and punish the wrong. . . ." Riis was not only the first muckraker to lead the newspaper readers through the dark bowels of Mott and Mulberry Streets in the 1880s, where pigs gobbled garbage and criminal

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children (some to be hanged in the Tombs) scampered and robbed, and where typhus victims sprawled on the police station floor. He was a pioneer journalism photographer, his flash powder illuminating the back alleys and "stale beer dives" where, in his harsh light, the distinction blurs between the refuse dumps and the human refuse that inhabits them. *Jacob A. Riis, Photographer and Citizen,* by Alexander Alland, Sr. (Aperture, $17.50) is a collection of 82 Riis photographs, with an introductory essay by Alland, the man who rediscovered and restored the old Riis faded glass plates for exhibition, and deposited them in the Museum of the City of New York.

Some of the Riis pictures are included in Roger Whitehouse's *New York, Sunshine and Shadow* (Harper & Row, $15), a photographic record of the city and its people from 1850 to 1915—with its 355 pictures and concise, informative text, as lovely and captivating a book as any I know on this town. A few scenes: a 1953 view of the interior of the old Crystal Palace; the great sailing ships lined up along South Street in 1884; Alexander Hamilton's country home in 1880, in what is now the heart of Harlem; children's coffins laid to rest in a mass grave in Potter's Field, Hart's Island, 1889; the interior of Steve Brodie's bar at 114 Bowery in 1890—with its pictures of pugilists on the ceiling, its wooden slats over the sawdust to soak up the beer, and its towels dangling from the bar to wipe the foam off your mustache. I'm going down to 114 Bowery one of these days and I'm afraid of what I'm going to find.

New York is the town where someone can come up behind you in the subway and grab you and turn out to be a mugger, thrill-killer or long lost friend. We need a book called *The Personal History of New York*—a less-than-400-page paperback filled with life-stories, neighborhood histories, maps and old photos—an interpretation of this city that would help its citizens love it intelligently before they destroy it or it destroys them. **R.A.S.**

to ram the Cross-Bronx Expressway through one mile of the East Tremont neighborhood when a simpler alternate route was just two blocks away. His was a brutal career that continued unquestioned until he finally abused the press that helped make him and underestimated the power of a man more ruthless than himself—Rockefeller.

Caro explains all this partly on the grounds that Robert Moses was his mother's son ("Behind her spectacles were the eyes of a builder"), but he relies largely on the theory that Moses was an "idealist" corrupted by power —as if power were that first teenage beer or toke that plunges the imbiber into inevitable addiction. Yet the evidence of Moses' youthful idealism is slim. As his career unfolds and the highways spin out we are moved to admiration, awe, sympathy, fear, but seldom to understanding. The inner man eludes us. He did too many things that enriched people's lives for us to be convinced of his profound personal corruption.

Ultimately, if we are to make a judgment on Robert Moses it cannot be on how he treated his co-workers, brother or wife but on whether or not his major public policies were really good for the city. With this in mind, it seems that the tragedy of Robert Moses' career is that like so many planners and politicians of his time, he did not see cities as true homes. In building the "good life" around the automobile rather than investing in mass transit, and in trying to relieve congestion by building more highways, he turned both urban and suburban life into a monumental traffic jam.

His was a public policy unhampered and uninspired by a long-range moral vision that both dreamed of a better society and respected the uniqueness and dignity of individuals. People no longer mattered. They became the eggs that had to be broken if the great omelet was to be made. In an interview a few weeks ago Moses declared that Grand Central Station might just as well be torn down and that the

Who really wants "religionless religion"?

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY says,
"(Boyd's) hang-up with church iconography blocks any chance of reaching the hard-core heathen — he hasn't yet found the forms of religionless religion."
— review of THE ALLELUIA AFFAIR, February 10, 1975

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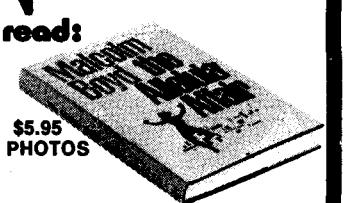

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people who put landmark plaques on old buildings in an attempt to preserve them were "fanatics." These were not the ravings of a senile old man, but a consistent statement of the insensitive and ultimately destructive philosophy that has guided his career. The "man who gets things done" has become the American Ozimandias, where "Round the decay/Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare/The lone and level sands stretch far away."

PETER FREIBERG

AFTER MOSES, WHAT?

As the recession's impact deepens across the country, major cities are being hit especially hard. Cutbacks in services, municipal employee layoffs, a lack of funds for public construction, widening budget deficits, declining tax revenues — all these are said to be making the "urban crisis" worse. Yet if one talks with neighborhood activists, environmentalists and even some city planners, a somewhat different perspective emerges: despite its tragic consequences, the recession isn't *all* bad. For while it is a fact that the economic situation makes it impossible to build worthwhile projects, it is equally true that the bad ones are being stymied.

This idea of recession as a two-edged sword was evident at a recent conference at the Tarrytown Conference Center in Westchester County, N.Y., on the subject "After Robert Moses, What?" Inspired by Robert Caro's book, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, the conference brought together seven panelists and about 100 students, planners and environmentalists for discussions on future planning in New York and other cities. To the majority of those present, there seemed little doubt that the post-World War II development boom has had disastrous effects on American cities; its end appeared to provide an opportunity to reverse gears and reconsider which direction to take.

Moses, of course, was the apostle of building and development. The extent to which his ideas and policies shaped New York—and served as a model for the rest of the country—is made clear by the need of his critics to use him as a starting point—if only to show how *not* to proceed. Although he never held elective office, Moses wielded unprecedented power for almost half a century. His methods allowed for virtually no participation by the public or even by legislators. Working through public authorities—semi-autonomous corporations established by legislative act but responsible thereafter only to their bondholders—Moses was able to obtain financing for projects that went far beyond the original legislative intention. The results by now are well known.

Nevertheless, Moses could always argue that he got things done—and so he did. Speaking of present-day New York, Professor George Sternlieb of Rutgers University told the conference, "We have a city dominated by a literally suicidal capacity for nay-saying. Thousands of groups can stymie action. No one person can guarantee action. You may not like Mr. Moses, but it's very difficult to do business without Mr. Moses."

This view, however, ignores the issue of what gets done. It assumes that the kind of massive projects built by Moses are what keeps a city healthy. Most of the Tarrytown panelists suggested that it was time cities began thinking small. "You can take living organisms, little things like blocks and neighborhoods," said Mary Perot Nichols, a senior editor and columnist at the *Village Voice*, "you can take things that are working and build on them." She cited Toronto as an example of a city that has taken steps to preserve its neighborhoods by such actions as calling a halt to downtown high rise construction, setting up traffic mazes in residential areas to discourage through traffic and concentrating on keeping its present residents happy rather than scaring them away.

Emphasis on neighborhood preservation hardly seems like a radical notion, but its implementation would in fact mean drastic changes in the orientation of every American city. Panelist Peter Blake, editor of *Architecture Plus*, questioned whether the city can survive if the free enterprise system remains unaltered. "Can you plan for a city," he asked, when its development is guided by people "whose only motivation is to make the greatest amount of money through real estate? If private interests are to control the development of land and the exploitation of land," said Blake, "our cities have had it."

To some, this neighborhood emphasis—and its corollary of decentralization to give communities a major policy-making voice—presents dilem-

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mas. There are, certainly, some large-scale plans that must be carried out. "Do we castigate Moses," asked Jaquelin Robertson, a former high-level planner in New York City and now vice president of a real estate development firm, "because he had power or because . . . his ideas are wrong? You're not going to be able to bring America around ecologically without a great deal of power." The planner's dilemma, Robertson said, is that "if you give him power that transcends local interests, he begins to abuse it, but with decentralization of power, you begin to believe you won't be able to do anything."

Yet a major point brought out in Caro's book—and one which he emphasized at the conference—is that the urban decline he documents so well occurred at the very time centralization was proceeding apace. "For half a century in New York," Caro said, "the motto has been, 'The cure for the evils of democracy is less democracy.' We might see if there is another way."

Caro pointed to the proliferation of public authorities as a growing danger, calling them "a fourth branch of government . . . that has its own sources of revenues." He suggested that if a new public authority is considered necessary to build a project, it should be limited to that project: "As soon as the improvement is paid off, the authority should turn it back to the city."

There are indications today that some reevaluation of urban policies is taking place, spurred in part by the kind of thinking that dominated the Tarrytown conference (which in turn owes much to Jane Jacobs' 1961 classic, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*). The energy crisis has strengthened advocates of mass transit. Public authorities are facing greater public scrutiny. Some cities have established "Little City Halls" to help citizens cut through red tape to obtain better services. "Mini plans" to preserve neighborhoods are being formulated in New York. The National League of Cities has urged a policy of "urban conservation" that would concentrate on housing rehabilitation rather than expensive new developments that have proved to be so disruptive.

Despite these hopeful signs, there was hardly a feeling of optimism at the Tarrytown conference. For the problems of American cities are deep-seated, and unless the reforms are speeded up and greatly expanded, they are likely to prove too little and too late.

If You Have a Lemon, Make Lemonade

WARREN HINCKLE

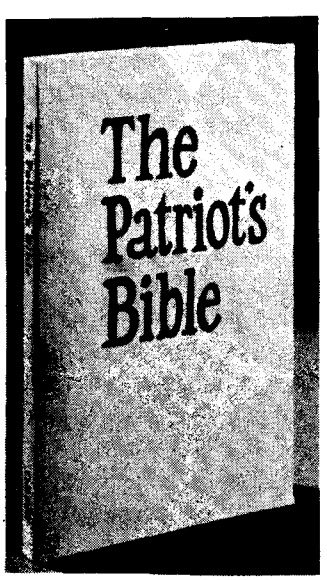
Putnam, $8.95

JOHN HEIDENRY

Warren Hinckle possesses few of those qualities which would make him a man for all seasons. His intellectual appetites are to be measured by the fact that he chose an advertising executive to be his philosophical mentor. This was Howard Gossage, who not only wrote but apparently thought in the neo-Stoicism exemplified by the maxim his disciple has taken as a title.

As for Hinckle's moral deportment we have his own word—the whole book is practically a deposition to the effect—that he is a scoundrel. He has bit every millionaire's hand that fed him after having first, with a shameless barroom bravado, kissed another part of their anatomy to ensure the funding of his radical-slick magazine *Ramparts*.

But he has a wonderful scaffold humor—and on that pinnacle Hinckle managed to last if not many seasons, then at least a magnificent and hilarious hour. What we are treated to here are the pub-talk memories that Hinckle has finally put down in writing. The funniest story of all is that *Ramparts* came to be founded in the first place. And the saddest part is that what started out as a serious Catholic literary magazine had to have so many provincially-minded converts serving as publisher and editors. What transformed *Ramparts* from a quarterly thick with pious epic poetry on special



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cream paper and articles attacking the immorality of J. D. Salinger was solely Hinckle's personality. If hardly blameless in so many other respects, Hinckle can never be accused of having been provincially Catholic. Little did founder Edward Keating suspect that he had hired a very Holden Caulfield himself, right out of college and the editorship of the University of San Francisco *Foghorn* and looking for the chance—as they say in Catholic circles—to test his vocation.

Hinckle tested Keating all right, and got fired. Later he was rehired and it was a roller-coaster ride all the way. On about the third curve Keating got nauseous—like any millionaire who has just wasted all his money—and was thrown out. The quarterly became a monthly, and the monthly published its own *Daily Rampart*, and every New Left muckraker in town converged on the Menlo Park offices for the big bash. Party games including exposing the CIA, the FBI, the State Department, the Warren Commission, the Bolivian junta, Cardinal Spellman, and American involvement in Vietnam. Hinckle has written some very funny pages—and perhaps the best comprise his little memoir of Erich Fromm at the end of the ride, when the *Ramparts* crew had been invited down to Cuernavaca by another potential backer and what followed was "an intellectual rabbit shoot." Hinckle and his friends were to be tested at the very same conference roundtable where Mexico's fashionable rich paid $1000 for the honor of joining in seminars with the author of *The Art of Loving* (the thinking man's Kahlil Gibran). They flunked. One thing that is nicely apparent about Hinckle is that—not to cast aspersions on the memory of Howard Gossage—he has no intellectual pretensions; and it is perhaps also true that a virtue to be gained from shameless barroom conning of millionaires is that it deprives one of the opportunity of being pompous.*

Still, upon closing the book it is hard to forgive Hinckle his flippancy towards serious political issues. He even tries to con the reader: "My reaction to journalistic outrage had led others, in turn, to be outraged—often at me. And this has led in turn to the style of unreasonable journalism of which I have often been accused, and stand happily guilty. I decided that, what the hell, it should be the job of the press—at least some of the press—to be unreasonable most of the time. Being unreasonable means being mean and persistent about the truth. It means more than merely telling the truth; it means screaming like hell."

Or is he only conning himself? Whether he knows it or not, Hinckle, such a very talented and likable man, is now in the line of work of somebody like, say, Art Linkletter, namely, being funny. He has just written a movie script, which is the perfect thing to write for a journalist who has never had anything of conscience to say. Hinckle still sits in the pub, past closing time, cracking jokes to those who will listen. That, too, is a rather small, provincial world. The larger world awaits, in fact, the Second Coming of another Edward Keating, perhaps a reformed alcoholic, who is disturbed by the lack of intellectual life in the nation's taverns, and proposes to do something about it. But, whoever you are, this time when you hire somebody to be your editor, check his credentials thoroughly.

So ends this review. Its author has done his honest best to make lemonade.

*He is not entirely free of being pompous. There are several rather offensive references to *Commonweal* and other "good grey" or "butcher paper" leftist journals, or to the "artsy-craftsy" *Jubilee*, which, it is inferred, were ineffectual by reason of the color of stock on which they were printed. One would be amused if this kind of put-down were meant to be merely Wildean; but in fact it hints of another side of Hinckle's personality—the garrulous self-righteousness of the pub braggart.

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CLAIRE HAHN

About ten years ago I sat in a Yale auditorium and listened to William Everson, then Brother Antoninus, O.P., read his poems. It was an astonishing performance. The poems seethed with a sometimes violent erotic mysticism and the Dominican lay brother seemed to drag each phrase out of anguished personal depths. But the audience, comprised mostly of Yale students, sat mesmerized. I remember hearing, during one long pause in the poet's reading, the distinct tapping of snowflakes on the auditorium windows. The control that Everson exerted was not all dramatic performance. His poetry was powerful and moving as it stood alone on the printed page. Brother Antoninus had achieved at this point in his career considerable stature as a poet of the "San Francisco Renaissance."

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of poems: *Man-Fate, The Swan Song of Brother Antoninus*. These poems are, as he tells us, "a love poem sequence." They explore the implications of his break with monastic life and his new union with Susanna and her infant son. This volume is comprised, he says, "of troubled verse." Indeed. But the trouble does not lie with the subject matter, as Everson fears. Most contemporary readers are sophisticated enough to accept with equanimity the transition of a monk to the lay marital status. My quarrel with Everson arises from his squandering of an enormous talent in gusts of undisciplined verse. The long introductory poem, "Tendril in the Mesh" with its heavy thump of alliteration, affected diction, and baroque metaphors reads like a bad translation of some fourteenth century Northumbrian verse. Who could endure much of this?

> Your face is flensed with an awesome devouring passion.
> In the flukes of contortion I fear what I see as I need it.
> My body is written with poems your fingers enscrolled on my flesh.

But I am a stubborn reader and endure I did for some 280 lines. After such a buffeting of bathos I probably over-reacted in joy to the quietly lovely "Ebb at Evening." However, this poem and "Man-Fate" seem to me to be eminently successful works of art. Here Everson is master of his craft. The agony that pulses just beneath the surface of his work establishes a rhythm that is dangerous, threatening, but controlled. Poems such as these and "The Black Hills" demonstrate that Everson remains an artist with reserves of power he has yet to tap.

Sister Maura, S.S.N.D., writes prayer poems. Reading her after wrestling with William Everson is an oddly disorienting experience. From a close-up nightmare of groin and sweat, the reader moves into a world of walled gardens, icons of Mary, and Advent wreaths. Sister Maura's characteristic poem is a taut, exquisitely polished lyric. Its thematic center is, as she says, God's word, "Come"; man's word, "Yes." Although the paperback makes the volume seem slim, there are close to eighty poems bound together here. Sister Maura groups her verses together thematically. The section "We Walk in Miracle," for instance, explores the sudden irruption of Divine light into the ordinary experience of her life as a nun. The final section "Not Entirely about Miracles" concerns the mystery of the human encounter with God in another, instants of revelation when,

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TOO MUCH RELIGION?

Conflict and Christianity in Northern Ireland

Ronald A Wells
Brian Mawhinney

Conflict and Christianity in Northern Ireland

by Ronald Wells and Brian Mawhinney

According to the authors of this brief, popular account, that's one way of describing the root cause of the ongoing struggle in Northern Ireland: too much religion, too little Christianity.

Wells and Mawhinney trace the centuries of tension and uneasiness between Britain and Ireland from a Christian rather than a political point of view, and suggest that the best hope for resolving the conflict lies in Bonhoffer-like "religionless Christianity" that can transcend traditional Catholic-Protestant divisions.

Conflict and Christianity in Northern Ireland is a sympathetic and helpful introduction to a problem that has become a matter of concern to Christians the world over.

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We turn like stars
and shine on each other.

These are lovely poems, light-filled and delicate. Sister Maura's special gift is for the descriptive metaphor. At times she seems as much impressionistic painter as poet. In one delightful moment of "Children's Dance Recital," little girls "Renoir-fleshed and sweet," come to the end of their performance:

The stage dims. Applause-radiant,
they stumble into night holding
their fathers' hands. Sleepily
they retrace their paradise
which, like Dante's, is flowering dance in light.

It is probably ungrateful of me to protest at this point that one can become surfeited, at least in this world, with so much other-wordly light. In Sister Maura's poems one is brought face to face with an intense and insistent smile. It is not complacent; we gather through some of the poems that it is hard won. I finally felt its pressure and longed for a change of expression, a glimpse beneath the fixed mask, the habit of perfection.

But is it possible, in the contemporary world, to write balanced poetry concerned with the mystical experience? Is there an expression on a religious poet's face that is neither the rictus of William Everson or the statue-like repose of Sister Maura's smile? Yes. John Moffit laughs, suffers, rejoices. His collection of poems, *Escape of the Leopard* is concerned with the religious experience of the total man. Moffit, a convert to Catholicism, was for twenty-five years a monastic member of the order of Ramarkrishna. He is at once a deeply concerned religious person and a skilled craftsman of verse, combining Sister Maura's control of meter and metaphor with the passionate vitality of William Everson.

Moffit's present volume of poems is divided into five sections. The first and last contain poems of the mystical experience. They form leaves for holding in tension other aspects of man's realization of life—violence, humor, tenderness. With an understated quiet he accepts in "The Flowering Corpse" the contrary yearnings of man's nature and the signs of Divine affirmation of this dichotomy:

Frilled orchids feed on sickly aid
And spend their rareness for the elect;
This flowering, squandered for the lost.
Feeds its magic on a corpse
That floated leafage veils from night.

John Moffit can be a wry comedian as in "The Itch Mite," and he can write the most tenderly worldly love lyric since Auden's "Lay Your Sleeping Head My Love." In his "Sacrament," Moffit preserves that precarious balance seen by Auden between total acceptance of human mortality and the full value of human experience.

Perhaps it is in the title poem of the volume, "Escape of the Leopard," that Moffit makes his most serene, mature poetic evaluation of the meaning of freedom. The feverish Leopard paces the limits of his cage until a bird's voice calms him with "a leap of vision:"

And all at once he swings his eyes
From the fixed stripings of the cage
—While the bird sings on heedlessly—
Toward the bare center of his space,
Then, with a slow, superior grace
Turning his body round one point,
Lolls in the center and is free.

Moffit's tone, for all its range and variety never becomes shrill, never cloys. The cones of the temporal and the eternal intersect with deceptive, or perhaps, Divine simplicity.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

REVIEWERS

FATHER RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., an associate editor of *Commonweal*, is author of *The Eagle and Brooklyn* (Greenwood Press).

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JOHN HEIDENRY is now *cantina*-crawling in old Mexico looking for good conversation.

CLAIRE HAHN is an assistant professor of English at Fordham University.

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Michael Novak (Cont.)

be free to go to war even while weakly saying it may not. In the next few months, we will likely see fresh pressures from North Korea upon South; a major change in Turkey; and "incidents" in Berlin. For our adversaries, it is a period of maximal opportunity.

Does anyone imagine that a world led by "Third World" nations will be a world of liberty? Faulty as our system is, no other remotely approaches it in liberty. It is, indeed, our liberties that permit us to be sinful as well as good. The "Third World" is not the planet's hope. It is weak in liberty, it spreads *ressentiment*, it shrouds the world in gray.

The wealth of the Arab world, in particular, is now so great that the Arabs can at any time bring Italy, Great Britain, Japan, India and France to economic collapse. In a decade, aside from ourselves, there may be not a single democracy in the entire world. Liberty has never been so threatened, not even in the late 1930s when Reinhold Niebuhr, with others, was writing of the "fall" and the "crisis" of the West. We are reduced to a second-rate army. Neither our strength nor our word inspires fear. The Republic is in greater danger than at any time in forty years.

In recent days, I have watched Garrick Utley struggle to contain a grin as he reported on the collapse of South Vietnam. It seemed to me a fitting image of our interpretive elite, those who tell us what is happening and what is yet to be.

We ought to steel ourselves for worse to come. Smell the air and see.

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 99*)

it not also herald a loss of faith in popular humanism, the illusion that man has everything under control?

TROY D. REEVES,

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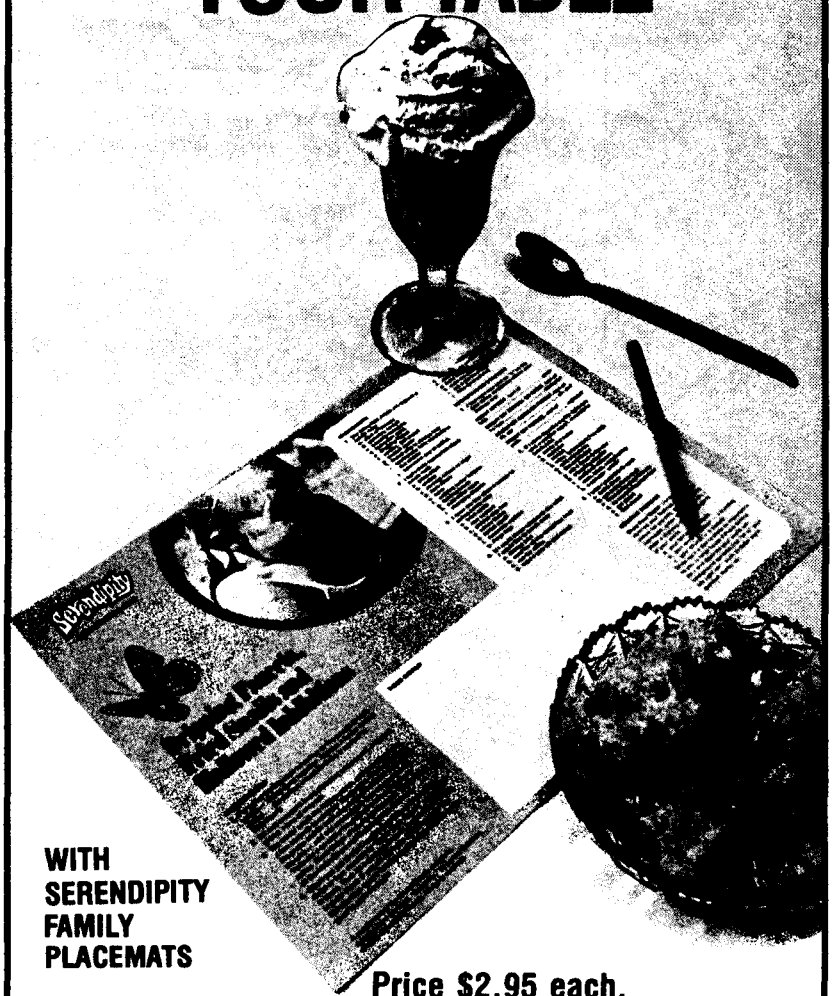

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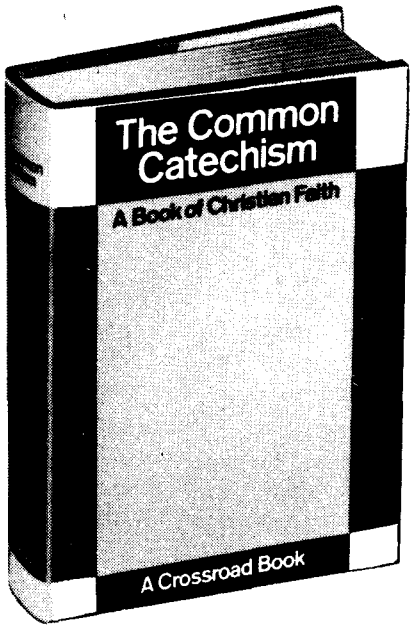

NEW A new era in the ecumenical movement will be ushered in by the publication this spring of *The Common Catechism: A Book of Christian Faith*. The book offers the first comprehensive statement of religious faith produced jointly by Catholic and Protestant theologians since the separation of the churches over four centuries ago.

The Common Catechism, in preparation for more than five years, was written by an international team of 40 Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians and educators, and will be published as A Crossroad Book by The Seabury Press. The work was edited jointly by The Reverend Lucas Vischer, director of the Theological Commission of the World Council of Churches, and the Reverend Johannes Feiner of the Secretariat for Christian Unity and the Papal theological Commission.

The Common Catechism complements and carries forward the ecumenical endeavor begun in the 1960's with the highly successful publication of *A New Catechism*, more generally known as the "Dutch Catechism" (originally issued by Herder and Herder, and now A Crossroad Book at The Seabury Press). *The Common Catechism* offers both a more concise presentation of Christian faith and a more explicitly theological point of departure. Where the "Dutch Catechism" began with the primary teachings of Christian revelation, *The Common Catechism* begins with the fundamental questions of human existence and then goes on to relate them to man's religious experiences and beliefs.

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